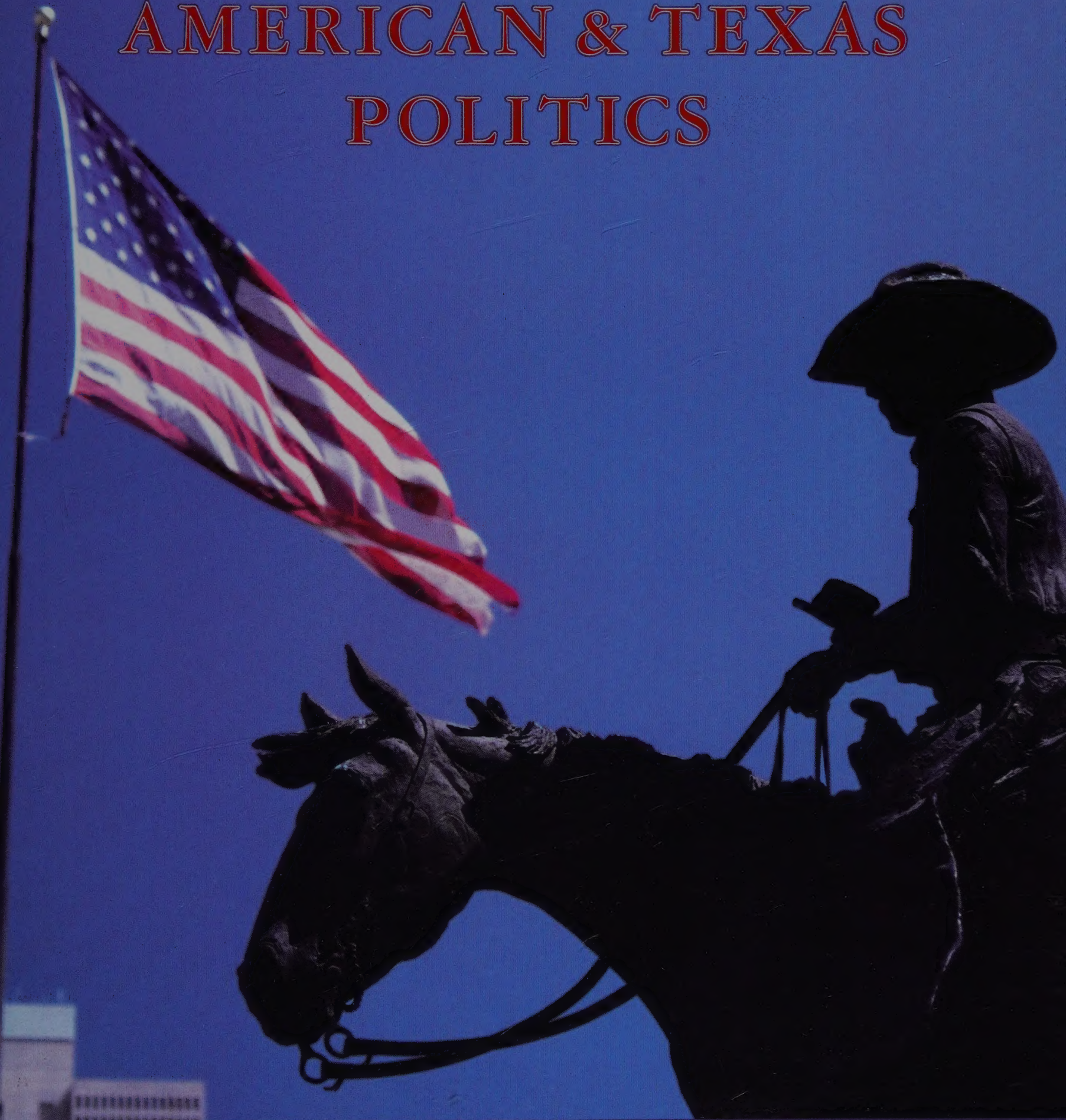


F O U R T H E D I T I O N

PROCESSES & POLICIES IN
AMERICAN & TEXAS
POLITICS



GLORIA C. COX, EDITOR

A WORKBOOK FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE 1050

18

FOURTH EDITION

PROCESSES & POLICIES IN
AMERICAN & TEXAS
POLITICS

EDITED BY

GLORIA C. COX

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

A WORKBOOK FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE 1050

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PREFACE

This workbook represents our effort as faculty members of the Department of Political Science to provide an additional resource for our students of Political Science 1050 and related courses. We hope this workbook will stimulate your interest in political science, provide additional information not available in your textbook, and enhance your enjoyment of the course you are taking.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

The subjects in this workbook parallel those you will study in Political Science 1050 at the University of North Texas. Although your professor may organize the course differently, the workbook consists of two major parts. Part I focuses on the study of the political process, including public opinion, the media, voting, political parties, interest groups, and nominations and elections. Part II covers public policy, including an exploration of the policy process, followed by chapters on social welfare policy, education policy, and global policy. In each chapter you will find:

- **An essay about the topic.** Each chapter contains at least one essay about the topic being studied. These essays concentrate on important issues that we consider worthy of additional reading. Each essay reflects the distinctiveness of each professor's expertise and writing style, so I hope that you will find them interesting, provocative, and informative.
- **A Pro & Con piece:** We have included for each chapter a short pro and con discussion of a controversial topic. We hope that these discussions will trigger your own interest in the subject and cause you to think about it within your own political framework.
- **Exercises:** Following each essay, you will find several exercises. Some of these exercises are designed to cause you to think about and apply the concepts you have studied. Others are designed to develop your research skills and may require that you obtain information from a government textbook, the library, or the Internet. Still other exercises are check-ups on what you have learned in the chapter. Your professor may assign all of the exercises for a particular subject or only one or two. You may still wish to complete those not assigned.

We believe that you will enjoy this workbook and that it will add interesting material and activities to your study of political science this semester. Best wishes for a great semester in political science and all of your other courses.

GLORIA COX, EDITOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This workbook has been produced through the cooperative efforts of the faculty and staff of the Department of Political Science. We hope you find it to be a useful and enjoyable source of information for your course. Faculty members worked hard to write essays and exercises that would support your study of American and Texas Government. Each section was read carefully several times by professors whose goals it was to make them as accurate and error-free as possible. Staff members also contributed to the project in many critical ways to enable us to meet our publisher's deadlines. I especially want to recognize the ongoing support and work of current and past department chairs, Professors Harold Clarke, Steven Forde, and R. Kenneth Godwin.

Faculty members receive neither payment for their contributions to the workbook nor royalties for its sale. All proceeds go to the Department of Political Science and are used to enhance the work of the department for undergraduate and graduate students. As a faculty, our best reward is for each student to benefit by the use of this workbook and to find the course more interesting and worthwhile because of it.

The Editor would like to express special appreciation to

- All members of the departmental faculty who wrote material for the book;
- Professors Battista, Feigert, Forde, Godwin, and Meernik for their invaluable assistance in proofreading and editing the manuscript;
- Professor Steven Forde who acted as business manager for the book; and
- The members of the University Administration for their support of this collegial endeavor.

Thank you for using this book. We hope that you will enjoy it!

GLORIA COX, EDITOR

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PART II

POLITICAL PROCESSES

CHAPTER 1

PUBLIC OPINION & POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

IN BRIEF, *public opinion* is the collected opinions of millions of people on a particular issue. It is deemed a great asset in a democracy for public officials to know what the public is thinking about important issues. Government officials do not necessarily take the action supported by the public on every issue, but at least they know the direction of public sentiment. They also know that citizens express opinions even when they have little knowledge of the subject.

Public opinion on any given issue may be *volatile* or *stable*. If it is a volatile issue, we would expect changes, even dramatic swings, of opinion over relatively short periods of time. In recent years, health care might be considered a volatile issue, because it has been in the news a great deal, with various proposals under consideration. The list of stable issues is long and includes crime and punishment, education, and national defense.

Since the 1930s, we have been able to ascertain public opinion on an issue in a fairly reliable way by polling a randomly selected sample of the population. If you want to know the opinion of medical doctors on a health care proposal, for example, you need not interview every doctor, just a small percentage of doctors. Such modern polling techniques enable us to know where the public stands on virtually any issue. The following essay explores polling in greater depth and should help you to understand the strengths of polling as well as some of the pitfalls.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT POLLING

Gloria C. Cox

"Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or denounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed." Abraham Lincoln in the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Most Americans think that polls work for the best interests of the public. Welch et al in American Government, p. 89.

"Lyndon Johnson once told a Gridiron Dinner that Patrick Henry had conducted a poll before he made his 'Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death' speech. (The results: 46 percent for liberty, 29 percent for death, and the rest 'didn't know')." Quoted by Leo Bogart in The American Polity Reader, 1990, by Ann G. Serow, W. Wayne Shannon, and Everett C. Ladd.

"People generally believe the results of polls, but they do not believe in the scientific principles on which polls are based." <http://www.gallup.com>.

Unless you are one of those individuals without a radio or a television, it is difficult to get through a day without hearing the results of a poll someone has conducted. Just this morning, I listened to a five minute explanation of a poll taken in the past few days. It revealed that the majority of Texans are conservative in their thinking, indeed somewhat more conservative than people elsewhere in the United States. The results of the poll suggest that Republican candidates for president are likely to have an easier time lining up support than the Democrats will. Are you as shocked as I was by the incredible insights revealed in this poll?

Sarcasm aside, polls are as ubiquitous as injury attorneys. They are everywhere, especially during presidential election years and at any other time there is an important political race to be decided. Not all polls are political, of course. Polls are frequently used in marketing research, for example, to ascertain the market for a particular product, a certain color of automobile, or whether more of us prefer ketchup or salsa with our sandwich. It fascinates me that those who conduct that kind of research are always eager to share it with us, as if to convince us that we, too, should prefer automated teller machines to human tellers. Perhaps we should remember that there may be hidden motives in the dispensing of such "valuable" information.

The Internet appears to have made polls even more inevitable for many people. Entertainment preferences seem to play a prominent role in Internet surveys. One survey I examined today included the following queries: Is David Hasselhoff possessed by the devil? Who is your favorite Friend? What actor is most presidential? Also available were surveys on other matters related to popular culture.

Polling has not always been as common as it is now, of course. It wasn't that people didn't want to know what others thought, but that no one had yet devised a reliable method for ascertaining public opinion, which we will define as *the collected opinions of millions of people on particular issues*. Elections have always caused a great deal of curiosity and there is a long record of people trying to predict their outcome. At least one newspaper undertook predictions as far back as 1824; by the 1880s, the *Boston Globe* was conducting exit interviews of voters as they left the polling booth (O'Connor and Sabato, 1993:350).

A LITTLE POLLING HISTORY

In the early years of this century, the *Literary Digest* conducted straw polls to pick presidential winners. In 1936, the editors predicted a landslide victory for Alf Landon over Franklin Roosevelt, just the opposite, of course, of what actually happened (O'Connor and Sabato, 1993:351). Straw polls are still used, although their accuracy is always doubtful. Straw polls do not rely on random sampling; they measure the opinions of those willing to call in, answer questions at the mall, or send in a little form expressing their views. Welch et al. (1996:87) refer to call-in polls as SLOP polls, those that are "self-selected listener opinion polls." Such polls are nothing more than the opinions of those who are willing to call at least once, and sometimes several times.

While polling began as market research in the decades after World War I, George Gallup, the pioneer of polling, brought better methodology to predicting electoral outcomes. Gallup opened his American Institute of Public Opinion in 1935 and brought a new rigor to the process of polling (Dye, 1994:137). He and his method became famous when he correctly picked the presidential victor in the 1936 contest (Lowi and Ginsberg, 1990:422). Still, results were not reliable, as evidenced by the great polling fiasco of 1948. You have no doubt seen President Truman holding newspapers with banners proclaiming Dewey the winner over Truman. Obviously, Truman was the actual winner.

POLLING ERRORS: UNINTENTIONAL AND INTENTIONAL DISTORTIONS OF RESULTS

Because polls are generally accurate, many people believe the results of every poll about which they hear or read, but that is an unwise practice. Polls are conducted in many ways and they differ substantially in accuracy. Let's spend some time considering both *unintentional* and *intentional* ways that poll results are made inaccurate.

Polls are flawed *unintentionally* by poll takers who want accurate results, but their lack of skill or ignorance of the process of poll taking results in polling errors. One of the most common unintentional errors is drawing a poor sample that is not representative of the population in which you are interested. Take, for example, the person conducting a poll about the views of women on issues related to careers, compensation, child care, and house work. The pollster hires several people to make telephone calls to interview people in the sample. The pollster selects articulate individuals, trains them, and tells them their work hours are from 9-5 Monday through Friday. All of the interviews are conducted during those hours.

Would you have confidence in the results of that poll? I hope that you would not, because very few working women will be interviewed and the poll results will reflect the views of women who stay at home with their children, are sufficiently well off not to have to work outside their home, or for some other reason, such as retirement, are not part of the work force. Any working women polled would be those from the night shift of a company. These pollsters would probably not include even one woman who is an attorney, a professor, or a corporate executive.

Indeed, problems with samples are common unintentional errors in polling. The problem with this example is obvious, but most sampling errors are less clear, even to pollsters with some experience. For accurate results, the poll taker wants a *random sample*, one that "ensures that every person in the universe of people about whom information is desired has an equal chance of being selected for interviewing" (Dye, 1994: 138). A classic case of a sampling error occurred in 1936 when the *Literary Digest* announced that Franklin Roosevelt would lose the presidency to his opponent. What the magazine did was send surveys to people whose names were drawn from automobile registration lists and telephone directories; the sample was skewed toward the well-off, who were more likely to vote Republican (Lowi and Ginsberg, 1990:422).

More recently, political scientists James McGregor Burns, Thomas Cronin, J. W. Peltason, and David Magleby write in their classic American government textbook *Government By the People* (1995:267) about a telephone call-in poll conducted in 1980 by ABC News after the debate between President Carter and candidate Ronald Reagan. The result was a 2-1 victory for Reagan that was widely announced along with the statement that the results were not scientific. However, these political scientists point out several problems with the poll, including the fact that it started at 11:30 p.m. so that many of Carter's supporters in Georgia and elsewhere in the East were probably already asleep. Moreover, it cost to call, so the poor probably skipped it, too. There were telephone company glitches and mixups, as well. Still, the results were big news and no doubt affected the leanings of some voters who look to the media for guidance and information.

In their efforts to be first to the public with results of elections, more and more news organizations seem to be relying on *exit polls*, questions asked of people who have already voted and who are leaving the polling place. What could be a better sample of what is happening in a particular place than to ask the actual individuals who have just voted to tell you how they voted? Think about this question for a moment: could pollsters go to just one precinct and extrapolate the results of that precinct to the whole state? Why not? Is it possible that some voters would refuse to tell for whom they had voted? What if some people just decided to lie about their selections?

Even with those potential drawbacks, exit polls allow stations to announce what they think the results will be just after the polls close on election night. They could announce the results all day or at some arbitrary hour, say 4 p.m., but public criticism of announcing projected winners early resulted in such a public outcry that news organizations generally wait until the polls are closed. While exit polls are usually accurate and are heavily used, particularly during the presidential primary season, they are not without embarrassing errors. In February, 1996, ABC News broadcast that Bob Dole would finish a distant third in the Arizona Republican primary. When Dole came in a strong second to Steve Forbes, Ted Koppel and other news personnel had to apologize to candidate Dole.

Another unintentional error that can occur in polling revolves around the difficulty of writing good polling questions. Writing good questions is much harder than it might seem at first glance. First, terms that are hard to understand or not well known will complicate the taking of a poll and interpreting the results. It can be difficult even to write a question that all of the interviewees will understand. Suppose you use a term like electoral college in a question. If the respondent answers "Don't Know" to your question, does it mean they do not have an opinion or that they have no idea what the electoral college is?

In writing questions for a poll, complexity of sentence structure must also be avoided. Otherwise the interviewee may have an opinion, but be confused by the wording of the polling question. Welch et al. (1996:85) point out the pitfalls of using questions with double negatives, as in the phrase, "Do you think that it is impossible that it never happened?" What is impossible there is deciphering what they want to know!

Some polling errors (like the ABC News example above) are clearly unintentional and inadvertent. However, there is another whole category of errors that I will refer to as *intentional* distortions of results. In those situations, the purpose is not to report public opinion on an issue or political race, but to use intentionally distorted results to promote a cause, a position on an issue, or a particular candidate. Have you ever received in the mail a letter conveying the results of a poll? The sender wants you to know that the majority of people believe as he or she does and that you might want to consider joining the popular side of the issue. Think about this for a minute: have you ever heard a politician say that he brought along some poll results to show that most people disagree with him and that perhaps his position on the issue is wrong? That will be the day.

A popular way to influence the outcome of a poll in the direction you want it to go is to select ways of asking questions that will elicit the results you want. The abortion debate seems to have spawned elaborate efforts of this type, with those favoring freedom of choice framing questions in terms of a “woman’s right to choose” and those opposed to all or virtually all abortions asking questions in terms of “a baby’s right to life.” That wording is hardly subtle, yet questions on many subjects can be just as cleverly worded. Consider the following questions:

- a. Do you favor a two-year limit on welfare benefits to end the problem of able but lazy people free-loading on the system at the expense of middle class taxpayers?
- b. Do you favor a two-year limit on welfare benefits even if it results in thousands of children being hungry and homeless?

Neither question is worded well if what the poll taker wants is an accurate response! Both questions are loaded, one toward one viewpoint, the other toward another view. According to political scientist Thomas Dye (1994:139), “Professional pollsters strive for questions that are clear and precise, easily understood by the respondents, and as neutral and unbiased as possible.”

OBSERVATION OF TRENDS

Sometimes when polls are taken over a period of months or years to measure the same issues, interesting trends may be observed. Since the early 1980s, polls have revealed a *gender gap* between the political views of women and men. That means that there are measurable differences between the way women view an issue compared to the way men view it. According to Dye (1994:155-56), these differences show up strikingly in issues involving the use of force, rather than in issues such as abortion, election of women to office, or equal job opportunity. What is not surprising, perhaps, is that women are much less likely to favor the use of force than men.

The gender gap on issues is reflected in the differences between men and women in the way they vote. In other words, those differences of opinion between men and women on issues make them prefer different candidates at the polls. According to McGlen and O’Connor (1995:73), in the presidential election of 1992, women were “four percentage points more likely to vote for Democratic candidate Clinton and 5 percent less likely to vote for the Independent Ross Perot.” Since women outnumber men in the United States and are just as likely as men to vote, the gender gap presents a serious problem for candidates. Since Democratic candidates ordinarily benefit from the gender gap and Republican candidates are usually hurt by it, women hold enormous political power to wield in elections.

Another interesting fact is that race makes a difference in opinions on some things. As we know from past public opinion polls, whites and Blacks had very different views on the trial of O. J. Simpson. That is just one particular case, but it points to substantial differences of opinion. According to Professor Dye (194:135-137), whites are much more likely to believe that equal opportunity exists than Blacks are. In addition, a majority of Blacks (60%) favor busing for racial balance while only 29% of whites do. A majority of Blacks (67%) favored extra efforts, including preferential treatment if necessary, to improve the economic condition of Blacks while only 16% of whites agreed with such a position. Clearly there are differences in opinion that are related to the race of those responding.

CONCLUSION

Polls are interesting and usually “accurate” if conducted properly. However, you would be wise to question them to make sure that they are fairly conducted and as accurate as they should be. Be mindful of the various ways, intentional and unintentional, that polling results can be distorted. Be sure not to let anyone, whether candidates for office, interest groups, or cereal makers, fool you into thinking that their unfair, deceptive poll should lead you toward a certain belief.

SHOULD ENGLISH BE OUR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE?

"Here is not a nation, but a teeming Nation of Nations."—American poet Walt Whitman.

"A central idea of the movement to make English the official language is that the English language is a unifying element to American society."—Herbert Levine, 1998, *Point-Counterpoint*, Sixth Edition, New York: St. Martin's Press.

We learn our political attitudes and values through a process called *political socialization*. When we are taught to say the Pledge of Allegiance, salute the flag, or sing the Star Spangled Banner, we are learning to honor the symbols of our nation. The ties we develop to our homeland will help make us patriotic citizens willing to serve our nation in times of need and keep us from betraying our national secrets and the public interest to America's enemies.

Many people believe, however, that we are rapidly losing our single most unifying factor, our common language. In this brief essay we will examine the arguments on both sides of the question of whether English should be named the official language of the United States.

YES!

Congress should make English our official language, whether through legislative enactment or constitutional amendment. Taking that action would mean many advantages for the United States, including greater socialization into American culture.

First, national unity is the foundation of a successful state. A nation whose citizens are nonchalant or lacking in strong ties to the nation is in danger of collapse from within. Of course there are examples all over the world, but we need look no farther than Canada and its problems with the Province of Quebec, which is primarily a French-speaking region. A separatist movement exists that would make Quebec a separate nation; in fact, referenda on the issue have been held. So far, the citizens have rejected independence for Quebec, but the issue remains a divisive one for Canada. Legislation requires that signs, forms, and other written materials be in both English and French in Quebec.

Clearly, the lack of a common language across Canada, as with other nations at other times, presents problems, just as the growing numbers of Americans who speak a first language other than English loom as a potential problem in the United States. Over and over again we have heard the virtues and benefits of communication to remove the barriers that separate us from one another when we are of different races, cultures, religions, and ethnic groups. However, effective communication becomes impossible, no matter how much we want it, when we do not understand one another.

Second, having just one language relieves the burdens that are currently placed on many public institutions. Take schools, for instance, which have to supply teachers for students in many different languages. If there were just one official language, the burden would shift from public institutions to those who do not know English. That burden would bring strong pressure to bear on non-English-speaking residents to learn the language in order to attend public school, apply for government benefits,

CON
&
PRO

and participate in the political process. The burden on the staff of public institutions to do their work in many languages would be relieved.

Finally, having an official language would be beneficial for residents of the U.S. who have a first language other than English. During the 1980s, about nine million people immigrated to the United States, most for economic opportunities (Cain in Peele et al., 1995:49,). Even though this is a large number of immigrants, they form a minority in every state. That means that they face a tremendous burden of assimilating themselves into this nation's institutions, from schools and colleges to politics. In Texas, even though Latinos are about one-third of the population, their political influence and socio-economic status are still low, partly because of the language barrier that keeps many from full political participation.

How better to pave the way for success than to require the use of a common language? Without the pressure that would come from having an official language, many immigrants might not learn English. With the application of that pressure, learning English becomes a necessity which then smooths the way for entry into education, the job market, and every other aspect of society.

NO!

There is no need in America to try to create an artificial sense of unity by adopting a national language.

First, it is certainly the case that national unity is a very important factor for any nation, including the United States. It is indeed true that nations in every part of the world have fallen into chaos and war when their national unity failed and broke down. However, that is clearly not a threat to the United States. This nation's stability rests on a firm foundation of common values that are admired around the world. Why do we need an official language when we have in common a strong belief in popular sovereignty, political equality, and inalienable rights? Those values create a sense of pride and attachment for the United States that is envied the world over.

In fact, one of the most admired qualities of the United States is its ability to tolerate tremendous diversity. We have long referred to our nation as a melting pot, but in recent years that image has given way to the idea that we are a beautiful tapestry woven of many different groups, cultures, races, and ethnicities. Part of that diversity is the presence of many different languages, from Chinese to Spanish to Urdu. We would certainly lose some of the richness of diversity that we have now if we were to require an official language.

Finally, imposition of such a requirement would lead to hardship and discrimination. Learning a new language is a tough process for many people, especially adults, who are already confronted with numerous difficulties. If they had to learn English right away for any communication between themselves and government, their socialization would be made much more difficult. Indeed, immigrants already face tremendous hardships in dealing with the burdens of finding work, adjusting to cultural changes, and coping with the requirements of government. Not only that, children could reasonably be expected to fall behind in school, perhaps permanently.

Moreover, we need not look very far to find intolerance and discrimination, especially against anyone perceived as an outsider. Our history provides all-too-many examples of mistreatment of immigrants and foreigners. It is, or should be, a source of shame to all of us that we have been so intolerant. Imposition of English would virtually authorize many Americans to "slam the door" with impunity on non-English speaking people or those with limited English skills as they seek jobs and entrance to schools, and try to participate in the political process.

The question presented here is one where we should remind ourselves of the old maxim: *Don't fix it if it ain't broke*. We are not a perfect society, but we have become increasingly mindful of the beauty of different cultures in recent years. Since things are working well, it seems a particularly bad time to approve an official language.

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[illegible]

SCORE

QUESTION: What is a random sample and how does The Gallup Organization achieve it?

[illegible]

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>
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HOW POLLS ARE CONDUCTED

Consult The Gallup Organization's web site and read the article entitled "*How Polls Are Conducted*" to answer the following questions.

1. The authors note that the key to polling accuracy is a fundamental principle called *equal probability of selection*. Write an explanation of that principle.

2. How have polling methods changed since 1986?

3. Name below four groups that are not included in Gallup's "sampling frame."

a. _____ c. _____

b. _____ d. _____

4. What is the size of the usual Gallup sample?

5. At that sample size, what is the margin of error?

6. If the size of the sample were doubled, what would the margin of error then be?

7. Why does Gallup use random dialing and a call-back procedure instead of polling the first person to answer the telephone?

8. Why is it important that questions about issues be asked in the same way year after year?

9. For what purpose would Gallup use a *split sample technique*?

10. Let's say that Gallup is conducting a survey on an upcoming presidential election and wants to break out the sample by several variables. Age is one such variable. What are three other points of information that pollsters would want to know for the persons being surveyed, i.e., what are some other possible variables?

a.

b.

c.

11. Name three potential errors that could cause polls to be inaccurate.

a.

b.

c.

12. In the article, you will find the following sentence: "*The original mission of polling was to amplify the voice of the public, not distort it...*" What does that statement mean? Has the polling industry been successful, and why?

NAME

SEAT NO.

SCORE

UNBIASED SURVEY QUESTIONS

Some survey questions are faulty, either because the designers of the survey want to skew the results a certain way or because they are inexperienced and unknowledgeable about the writing of such questions. Whatever the reason, biased questions produce inaccurate results.

Try your hand at recognizing the problems with badly worded questions. Each question below is poorly worded and unworthy of being used in a survey. In each case figure out the problem and summarize it in the space provided.

1. Do you favor or oppose ending current government handouts to welfare recipients?

2. Do you favor or oppose the practice of killing little babies by the partial birth abortion method?

3. We want to know your opinion of this president. Does he remind you more of Richard Nixon or Jimmy Carter?

4. Do you favor or oppose campaign finance reform to prevent wealthy businesses and groups from manipulating the political process with political donations?

5. Do you favor or oppose laws that would allow government to take the private property of ordinary, hardworking people to protect an endangered species?

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

UNDERSTANDING USEFUL TERMS

BACKGROUND: Sometimes it is helpful to depict the results of public opinion surveys on charts. There are three common types of distribution we would expect to see if we presented survey results in that way:

Normal Distribution: most respondents are congregated in the middle, with fewer at the ends (extremes) of the scale. When this kind of distribution is depicted on a graph, it will look like a bell-shaped curve. A good example would be the distribution of grades in a large college class.

Bi-modal Distribution: Respondents are divided about evenly into two groups. You might get this kind of result with a yes/no question.

Skewed Distribution: A large percentage of respondents falls on one side of the spectrum, with few on the other.

In the space below, present an example of a particular issue on which the results would likely be that particular kind of distribution. A good source of examples would be your textbook for this class.

1. NORMAL DISTRIBUTION

2. BI-MODAL DISTRIBUTION

3. SKEWED DISTRIBUTION

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

TESTING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Check your knowledge by answering the questions below. For multiple choice questions, circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. The 1936 *Literary Digest* presidential election poll is an example of which of the following polling practices?
 - A. making an excellent guess based on nonscientific observations
 - B. rigorous methodology which enables correct prediction of the presidential winner
 - C. biased sampling techniques which result in an incorrect prediction of the results
 - D. deliberate misreporting of the results
2. Why should a poll based on telephone calls and e-mails to a radio station be treated as unreliable?

3. What is the most common *unintentional* error in polling?

4. What do we call a sample that ensures that every person in the group being studied has an equal chance of being selected?

5. How can the time of a program or differences in time zones make a difference in the outcome of a radio or television poll?

6. The *Literary Digest's* survey was biased because it
 - A. over-surveyed those who were Democrats.
 - B. conducted its interviews in person.
 - C. got its sample from car registration and telephone directory lists.
 - D. under-surveyed those who were financially well-off.
7. According to political scientist Thomas Dye, pollsters should strive for questions that are
 - A. _____,
 - B. _____, and
 - C. _____.

8. Which of the following survey questions is less biased?
- A. Do you favor abolishing federal student loans that frequently are not repaid by students?
 - B. Do you favor abolishing federal student loans that enable hard-working students to complete their education?
 - C. Do you favor abolishing the federal student loan program?

9. What is meant by the term *gender gap*?

10. Name two issues on which you believe there might be a gender gap.

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POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VOTING

IN BRIEF, the most important act of political participation is voting. In a true democracy, where there is one person-one vote, there is at least one day of the election cycle when everyone is truly equal. The poorest individual who exercises the right to vote has exactly the same amount of political influence as the president, a member of Congress, a general of the army, or the chief executive officer of a major corporation. However, as important as voting is in a democracy, it is a right exercised even in a presidential election by only about half of all those who are eligible.

Still, voting is certainly not the only way to participate in the political life of the nation. Political participation can take the form of working to register voters, circulating petitions, running for office, and other activities, all of which are considered quite acceptable to our neighbors and friends. We speak a little more cautiously of other forms of political activity because we know from various polls that people are less likely to approve of them. Take, for example, the practice of boycotting certain products, such as grapes, lettuce, or chocolate, to express disapproval of some aspect of the production process or company practice. Such an economic boycott can be quite effective, but not everyone considers it a fair practice. Do you have an opinion?

Still other political activities are actually illegal. This category includes painting over billboards or other advertising signs; occupying a public building and perhaps chaining oneself to the structure; or holding a demonstration when a permit has been denied by public officials. Are you upset at this? What an outrage, you say, to think of committing a crime in the name of politics. Would it be more glorious if it happened 200 years ago in Boston and the protest involved tea?

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: EXTENT AND LIMITS

Frank Feigert

"Over the years, mass marches on Washington [have] not been welcomed by American presidential administrations."—Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s through the 1980s. 1990.

If you and your friends march on the administration building to protest an increase in student fees, is this "political?" If you think so, is it less "political" if you march in support of the United Way? Why would you think so? Any consideration of the use of the word "political" as an adjective must account for what follows. For example, Political Action Committees (PACs) are committees organized by interest groups to make legal contributions to public office holders and candidates. Their purpose is to affect the outcomes of political decisions that can influence their status.

Similarly, in discussing political participation we must recognize that there are many forms of participation, all with the potential to affect the political process. In this essay, we focus on the types of participation in which ordinary citizens can engage. But first, we must start with the *absence* of participation, a fact for which there is all-too-much evidence in our society.

This first level is non-voting. Those who fit into this category are now close to a majority (and for most offices are the majority), as we discuss below. The extent of this phenomenon is made clearer in the next discussion. Commonly associated with this is a lack of interest in and knowledge of government and its affairs. The reasons for this phenomenon are many and include legal, sociological, and psychological factors. We return to this in the next section on legal barriers to voting.

Voting is commonly understood as the minimum political act in which we can take part. Presidential elections generally attract greater attention than do contests for other offices. Yet, since the Kennedy election of 1960 (with a postwar high of 62.8%), there has been a consistent fall-off in voter turnout. By 1988, just 50.1% of the eligible electorate bothered to vote. The increase to 55% in 1992 may be attributed to many things, including the Perot candidacy. In 1996, less than a majority (49%) voted for president, and in 2000, a bare majority voted. The fact remains that the United States has the lowest voter turnout among the Western industrialized democracies.

Declining turnout is evident for state and local races as well, with even lower turnout levels. In presidential election years, we can usually expect that at least 5% fewer will vote for members of Congress than for president. But, in "off-year" elections (when the presidency is not being contested) the voting rate really drops, usually down to less than 40%. In recent off-year races it has dropped to about a third (1998, 36.4%) of the voting age population.

Governors' races tend to have the greatest participation rates among state elections, while state legislative races have less. This continues down the ballot to the point where many communities have less than 10% turnout for local elections, such as those for mayor, council, or school board. There is an irony to this, inasmuch as one of our nation's traditional beliefs is "*that government is best that is closest to home.*" Yet, few enough of us pay attention to state and local matters, much less vote in elections for their offices.

Active participation takes many forms. In addition to voting, citizens may become involved in a wide number of conventional acts of participation, as well as unconventional activity such as demonstrations. However, the greater the level of activity, the smaller the proportion of citizens who participate. Included in these categories are: 1) *contact specialists*—those who may contact public officials about particular problems; 2) *communicators*—people who keep informed about and discuss politics, and who may write letters to editors and political leaders; and 3) *party and campaign workers*—people who work in campaigns, giving of their time and money to elect candidates for public office. Explanations of these levels will emerge in our discussion of voting behavior below.

REMOVING LEGAL BARRIERS TO VOTING

The *franchise* (right to vote) in this country has expanded by fits and starts. Initially, only the states regulated voting. Under the Constitution (Article I, Section 4), Congress is limited to regulating only the “*time, place, and manner*” of federal elections, hardly a set of significant powers. In short, the states were able to set their own voting requirements. Early on, many states imposed a very limited franchise, initially restricted to free, white, property-owning males 21 years of age or older. Changes to these limitations occurred on a state-by-state basis, if somewhat irregularly. Despite the Jacksonian revolution of the 1820s that favored the common man, a few states still had the property-owning qualification by 1850 (Flanigan and Zingale, 1983:5). Property qualifications for voting became unimportant and were generally abandoned as settlers moved to the property-rich areas on the frontier. Other significant changes were brought about by amendments to the Constitution and by laws enacted by Congress.

The principal changes have come about through constitutional amendments. In fact, it can be argued that the greatest number of amendments deals with voting rights. The racial limitation was set aside by the *Fifteenth Amendment* (1870), giving former slaves the right to vote. However, the right to vote was not truly realized until passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and its successors (1970, 1975, 1982). Women got the right to vote with passage of the *Nineteenth Amendment* (1920).

Society’s attitudes about women were long in changing, and it was not until 1984 that women reported voting in the same proportion as men (Conway, 1991:32). In 1992, a slightly higher percentage of women than men voted. However, women still lag behind men in holding public office. The last significant extension of the franchise came with passage of the *Twenty-Sixth Amendment* (1971), granting the right to vote to those aged 18-20.

In addition to these changes, other constitutional amendments deserve mention, as they also affect the right to vote. The following Constitutional provisions are especially important.

a. *The Seventeenth Amendment* (1913)—giving us the right to vote for senators directly. Prior to ratification of this amendment, we could vote directly for only one federal official, the member of the House of Representatives from our Congressional District. State legislatures elected U.S. senators. Because only one-third of the U.S. Senate is up for election every two years, this means that a popularly elected Senate and House did not meet until after the 1918 election, some 130 years after the Constitution was ratified.

b. *The Twenty-Second Amendment* (1951)—while intended to limit presidents from serving more than two full terms, some consider this a restriction of our ability to reelect a popular incumbent president. Interestingly, only three presidents (Eisenhower, Reagan, and Clinton) have been affected by this provision.

c. *The Twenty-Third Amendment* (1961)—finally made it possible for citizens of the District of Columbia to vote for president, by providing D.C. the same number of electors as the smallest state, which in practice means three electors. If Washington were a state, its population would entitle it to four electors.

d. *The Twenty-Fourth Amendment* (1964)—eliminated the poll tax, a device that had been used in most southern states at one time or another, requiring citizens to pay for the right to vote. At the time the amendment was passed, only two states (Texas and Virginia) still had a poll tax.

African Americans experienced the greatest barriers to political participation in the South, following the Civil War. Passage of the *Fifteenth Amendment* in 1870 guaranteed the right of African Americans to vote, at least theoretically. Yet, there were numerous devices used to stop them from voting. Among these was *terror*: acts of violence committed by the Ku Klux Klan and other groups designed to discourage black citizens from registering or voting.

Further restrictive devices included the *white primary*, a device used in Texas and elsewhere during the first half of this century. Texas law provided that the Democratic Party was a private club, which had the freedom to restrict voting to members. The Democratic Party chose to limit voting to whites. The effect was to limit the ability of African Americans to participate meaningfully in the selection of state and local officials. The Supreme Court had declared all versions of the white primary unconstitutional by 1944.

There was also the *grandfather clause* which stopped people from voting if their grandfather had been ineligible to vote, clearly discriminating against descendants of slaves. Of course, if, in 1900, one's grandfather had been ineligible to vote, the same could be said of that person's grandchildren, two generations later.

Literacy or constitutional understanding tests, not really measuring literacy, were administered in such a way that Blacks automatically failed, while illiterate whites could usually expect to pass. These limitations were effectively swept away by the Supreme Court, in a long series of cases.

The *poll tax*, later made illegal by the *Twenty-fourth Amendment* and certain rulings of the Supreme Court, was intended to discriminate against Blacks, but had the effect of discouraging poor whites, as well. Finally, *residence requirements* were used initially to dissuade wandering bands of former slaves from voting in the post-Reconstruction era. Although the 1970 Voting Rights Act changed the residence requirement for voting in federal elections to 30 days, this remains the principal legal barrier to voting, since roughly 20% of our population moves in any given year, and any move invalidates the previous registration. In 1972, in the case of *Dunn v. Blumstein*, the Supreme Court invalidated a Tennessee law that required a year's residence in the state and three months in the county. Interestingly, it is likely that the group most currently discriminated against on this basis would be college and university students. In many states, they are required to vote where their parents are registered.

“MECHANICAL “ ASPECTS OF VOTING

Largely ignored until recently has been another set of variables that affect whether or not people bother to vote, and *whether or not their votes are counted*. For instance, it has been well-known for some time that a party's or candidate's *ballot position* can affect the outcome, with about a 5% advantage going to whoever is listed first. The physical manner in which we vote, whether on paper, by machine, or electronically, can also affect whether and how our ballots are counted. If nothing else, the presidential election of 2000 shows this all too clearly, as the true Florida vote remained in doubt long after the

Supreme Court stopped further counting of the disputed ballots, giving George Bush the state's electoral votes and the presidency.

Until recently, the paper ballot has been associated with the highest turnout, perhaps because voters felt more "comfortable" with the paper ballot, or because its use in rural areas provided opportunities on Election Day to socialize. However, if the ballot is to be counted, it must be marked accurately. For instance, most state election codes allow only one type of mark on a ballot, a corner-to-corner "X, not going outside the lines. This seems clear enough until we realize that pens slip, and a mark may go marginally outside the box. Will it count? This depends on the interpretation of the election official counting the ballot, and whether someone from the other party is also checking the ballots. One of the first principles of honest elections in the U.S. is ensuring that election officials represent more than just one party, so as to greater ensure honesty in the counting of ballots.

In January 1996 the state of Oregon held the first U.S. Senatorial election to be conducted totally by mail. The convenience of voting by mail greatly increased voter participation. Would you be more likely to vote if could do so by mail? Do you see any disadvantages to this scheme of voting? How do you feel about Internet voting, which has also been proposed?

Voting still takes place in some jurisdictions on machines, and these are generally associated with the second-highest turnout. However, the machines often lead to voter confusion (e.g. not leaving the lever down after casting a vote), as well as discomfort, since they have to pull a lever that closes a curtain behind them. These will probably disappear from the scene shortly, as the last ones were made in 1988, and maintenance has proven to be a problem.

Finally, there is electronic voting, which takes many forms. By far the most controversial is that which uses a punch-card ballot. As we saw in Florida in the 2000 election, many things can go wrong. The ballots are read by an optical scanner that "reads" the light shining through the ballot where punched, and records these on a computer. BUT: this assumes that the card has been punched both accurately (the way the voter intended) and completely. We know that accuracy was a problem for many of the 19,000 voters in Palm Beach County, where the "butterfly ballot" was used. This ballot used punches, but was labeled in a confusing way. Hence, some voters were apparently confused when they saw the name of Al Gore and punched out, instead, a vote for Pat Buchanan.

As for incomplete punching, the world was introduced to the "chad" problem in Florida. A "chad" is that tiny piece of cardboard that is supposed to be punched out with the stylus, so that the optical scanner can get a clean signal. If it is not cleanly punched, all the way through, it is known as a hanging, or swinging chad, depending on how many corners still secure the chad to the ballot. A "pregnant" or "dimpled" chad is one that is pushed only partially. Should any of these have been counted? The voters' intent could be discerned, but were these legal ballots? For the better part of five weeks we could see members of different county election commissions peering intently at these ballots, trying to decide whether to count these ballots. Ultimately, as we know, the case of *Bush v. Gore* was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court, in which they ruled that a complete recount could not be done. This decision favored Governor Bush of Texas, and ultimately made him president. Will these mechanical impediments be removed for future elections? The one thing that adherents of both candidates agreed upon was that the right to cast a valid ballot, *and to have it counted*, is fundamental.

However, although many states rushed to introduce legislation that would bring about fairer systems of voting (such as the fill-in-the-blank optical scan ballot used in many Texas counties, or touch-screen computers), little was being done about it at this writing. One reason is basic—states are charged with the administration of elections. Either they or their designees (typically counties) must come up with the funds for new election procedures and ballot forms. In the face of a weakening economy, public officials have had to put ballot reform alongside other pressing issues. It is often easier to deal with the demands of public employees for pay raises, or the need to buy a new fire truck, or to cut taxes, for that matter, than to buy new voting equipment. The Florida crisis over, public officials were beset with an attitude of “it can’t happen here, and if it does, there are other needs as well.” It is likely though that Florida will move ahead with plans to ban punch card ballots to prevent a recurrence of the problems of the 2000 election.

The biggest barrier to voting, for now, seems not to be legal and mechanical, but attitudinal. As the public becomes increasingly cynical about politics, it is only reasonable to assume that fewer people will vote, and the dangers in this are many. If less than a majority of voters selects candidates for our highest office, and substantially fewer vote for congressional and other offices, to what extent and for how long will our government have a claim to legitimacy, that they act as agents of the public, having been selected by the public? For those voters in Florida, and perhaps elsewhere, who were stopped by county sheriffs for car safety checks, or who found they were mistakenly listed as convicted felons and therefore could not vote, there is a basis for the cynicism they hold. Unless substantial reforms are made in terms of allowing full and free access to the ballot, and unless public officials are seen as responsive, we may well continue to see a decline in voter turnout.

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IS THERE A GENDER GAP?

Gloria C. Cox

YES!

There is a gender gap in American politics. One type of gender gap stems from the fact that there are about seven million more women of voting age than men in this country. Since women are now slightly more likely to vote than men (reversing a trend of past decades), candidates should be aware of the force of women voters.

That, however, is not what most people mean when they use the term *gender gap*. It is used more often to refer to the difference in the way that men and women vote. For a long time we assumed that if three million people voted for one candidate and two million for the other, there would be about an even number of women and men in the three million figure and in the two million figure. In fact, we know now that there may be a substantial difference in the percentage of women who vote for a particular candidate and the percentage of men who do. Men may clearly prefer one candidate and women may clearly prefer another. The interesting ongoing discussion in American politics is why we are witnessing this phenomenon.

One reason for the gender gap is that men and women have very different views on the appropriate role of government in our society. Women are much more likely than men to turn to government to solve major societal problems. This fact is especially true when the issue is social welfare programs and caring for the needy; women tend to support programs that are compassionate toward the less fortunate (Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern, 36). That fact is of much significance since assistance programs cover a great variety of services such as food supplements for mothers and children, medical care for the elderly and the poor, housing assistance for the needy, and job training for the unemployed.

Another reason men and women prefer different candidates is that men and women do not support the use of force to the same degree (Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern, 35). For example, women are more likely than men to support gun control measures and less likely to approve of the use of military intervention. Additionally, women are less likely to approve of the death penalty than men (McGlen and O'Connor, 1995:38). Once again these are major differences between men and women on important issues.

These differences in what government should do inevitably lead to differences in party preferences. It seems clear that the policy preferences of women steer them to the Democratic Party whose leaders take positions more in accord with those of many women. That preference for the Democratic Party translates into support at the voting booth from women voters for Democratic candidates over those of the Republican Party. Observers first noticed these candidate preferences when popular president Ronald Reagan won much more support from men than from women. The same scenario played out in subsequent elections, too. Some candidates clearly have a great deal more appeal to voters of one sex than to the

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&
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other. Ann Richards became Governor of Texas in 1990 through the support of women voters. Fifty-nine percent of women voted for Richards, compared to 41% of men (McGlen & O'Connor, 1995:73).

Parties and candidates have become keenly aware of the differing preferences of men and women. They have to be particularly mindful of how their campaign speeches and other advertising will affect not just voters, but male voters and female voters. If a candidate makes an obvious appeal to women voters, he or she runs the risk of alienating some of the male voters and vice versa. All of these facts point to one important political reality: the political power of women voters is very important to every candidate and party, and it has brought a new dimension to the political environment of the U.S. The gender gap is real.

NO! While a great deal has been said about the so-called gender gap in recent years, the presence of any such gap has been greatly exaggerated. In their 1997 book Sex As A Political Variable, Richard A. Seltzer, Jody Newman, and Melissa Voorhees Leighton explore the idea of a gender gap and suggest that a number of myths has grown up around the idea. Their conclusion is there have always been some differences in how men and women vote, but there really isn't anything new to support the extraordinary interest we have seen in recent years concerning the gender gap.

These authors suggest that what is new are not differences in the way men and women vote, but attention to and interest in the phenomenon since the 1980s (p. 39). Much of that interest may be accounted for by the fact that in 1996, "52% of all voters were women" (McGlen and O'Connor, 1998:70). Such interest in how women vote naturally emerged once we recognized that women are a majority of the electorate.

This is not to say that men and women voters see political issues the same way. Women and men are socialized differently and have different experiences in school, employment, and politics that contribute to varied viewpoints on issues. Those differences have probably always existed, but we have more interest in them now that women voters outnumber men.

However, different viewpoints are just as common among other groups in society as they are among men and women. The best example may be the tremendous differences that exist between the views of white and Black voters. These differences show up in surveys on many issues, including the extent to which racism still exists in the United States and whether affirmative action programs should be kept or phased out. Occasionally an event like the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles police or the trial of O. J. Simpson causes the popular media to highlight some of these differences of opinion that various scholarly studies verify.

It is also the case that other groups are separated by huge gaps in their issue view points. College graduates disagree substantially with less-well-educated persons on many issues. It is commonly known, for example, that tolerance of unpopular views and actions increases with education. Likewise, rural and urban dwellers have little in common on most issues. It comes as no surprise that voters in the big cities of the East have very little in common with those who live in the mountainous or desert regions of the West. To say then that differences of opinion on public issues is an unusual phenomenon denies the comparisons that can be made between many groups in our electorate.

Why then all the focus on women and how they vote? The main reason is that women are now the single largest group in the American electorate, so candidates and parties deliberately target their issue positions—and advertising about those positions—toward women. In fact, that is precisely what the Clinton-Gore campaign did in 1996. Small wonder, then, that the results were so one-sided. While men split their votes about evenly between Dole and Clinton, women were much more likely to vote for

the Clinton-Gore ticket. According to McGlen and O'Connor (1998:73), the targeting of issue positions toward women by the Clinton-Gore campaign paid off with a majority of women (54%) voting for that ticket compared to only about a third of women voting for Dole-Kemp.

Such campaign tactics are shrewd and productive, but we should also recognize that they tend to be self-fulfilling. Once a campaign decides to go after the votes of women and focus on issues and issue positions that are appealing to women, the so-called gender gap is very likely to show up in election results. Next time around, candidates are aware of the disparity in vote and once again tend to focus on issues where men and women differ. It may just be that the gender gap, while real in a sense, has helped to create and perpetuate itself.

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EXERCISES 2-1

In the space below, analyze the following question, including at least four ideas in your essay:

[illegible]

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You are a regular consumer of a particular product. Your family likes the product and it is within your price range. Week after week it is on your grocery list (or drug store list, or whatever). Unrelated to your purchase plans is your strongly-held opinion on a number of political issues. While watching television one night, you learn that the owner of the company that makes your favorite brand is a strong supporter of a point of view quite different from your own. In fact, she gives a great deal of money to groups that support her thinking. Is it or is it not an appropriate political act to boycott the product and try to get others to do likewise? Give your answer and explain your reasoning in the space provided.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

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EXERCISE 2-3

BARRIERS TO VOTING

The right to vote (*suffrage*) has been greatly expanded through the decades. Listed below are several barriers to voting that once existed. Using your textbook and other sources as necessary, find out how and when each barrier was eliminated, and write your answer in the blank provided.

1. Property Requirements

2. Race, Color, Previous Condition of Servitude

3. Grandfather Clauses

4. White Primaries

5. Literacy Tests

6. Residency Requirements

7. Poll Taxes

8. Reluctant and/or Hostile Registrars

9. Difficult and Time-Consuming Registration

10. Sex

NAMESEAT No.SCORE

EXERCISE 2-4

HOW FAR ARE YOU WILLING TO GO WITH POLITICAL PARTICIPATION? A GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL PROJECT

The vast majority of Americans never engage in any political activity beyond voting. Many, of course, do not even bother to do that. However, that does not mean that there aren't many types of political activities available to those who want to make their views known. Below is a list of various political activities, followed by several tasks to be carried out.

TYPES OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- A. Attending a political rally for a candidate, a cause, or a political party
- B. Marching peacefully on the sidewalk outside the home of a public official
- C. Destroying the property of a group with which you disagree (in a manner that will not cause injury to any person)
- D. Circulating a petition and asking your neighbors, friends, and others to sign it
- E. Occupying a public building by chaining yourself to a staircase in the building's interior
- F. Marching outside the home of a doctor who performs abortions
- G. Causing physical injury with the possibility of death to the employee of an organization with which you disagree
- H. Going to Washington, D.C. for a large rally of like-minded persons
- I. Voting
- J. Writing a letter to your Senators and Representatives
- K. Staging a hunger strike
- L. Marching in such a way as to cause traffic tie-ups and backups
- M. Refusing to buy the products of a company with whose policies you disagree (economic boycott)
- N. Writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper or other publication
- O. Trying to hack into the computers of organizations with which you disagree

Working on your own or as a member of a group within your class, answer the following questions:

Rank in order the activities above from the lowest level of political involvement to the highest level of political involvement. You may list just the letters below:

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ | 15. _____ |

Study the list above, including your rank-ordering. Decide at which point the list of activities becomes one in which you would not personally ever engage, no matter how strongly-felt your opinion was. Mark that place on your list.

Take a look at the activities that you decided would never be appropriate for you. Explain in the space below why you drew the line where you did.

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REVIEWING THE TOPIC

Answer the questions below to review the material in this chapter and related information:

1. Although it was also used at other times, the political march or demonstration was very common during the 1960s. Find and list below two examples of major demonstrations (marches) in Washington, D.C. When did they take place? What issues were involved? Who were the leaders?

A. _____

B. _____

2. Why do some observers believe that failing to vote was once due mainly to legal barriers but is now due to attitudinal ones. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

3. A common characteristic of U.S. elections is low voter turnout. Identify three reasons why voters fail to show up to vote.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

4. Many political scientists believe that low voter turnout in a democracy is a positive rather than a negative indicator. How might low turnout be viewed in a positive way?

5. If you are considered a *communicator*, what kinds of political activities might you undertake?

6. Six constitutional amendments have made substantial changes in determining who can vote in the U.S. and under what conditions elections can be held. Identify the number of each Amendment, the year it was ratified, and explain what each accomplished.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

7. Why do you think that women are more likely to vote now than they used to be?

8. Many people laughed at the expense of Florida voters and their experiences in the 2000 elections. Among the things at which they laughed were the more than 19,000 votes cast for Patrick Buchanan, no friend of minorities, that were seemingly intended for Al Gore. This happened on the so-called "butterfly ballot." Explain how such voter confusion could have taken place.

9. The "chad problem" was also one that drew a lot of derision, as many ballots were incompletely punched, so that votes were not tabulated. Offer two reasons why this could have happened, other than the possibility that some people were too weak to push the chad all the way through.

A. _____

B. _____

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CHAPTER 3

POLITICS AND THE MEDIA

IN BRIEF, the print and broadcast media provide for most of us our best link with government. Through television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, we find out what is going on in government every day. Broadcast media have both nationalized the news and personalized it. We witness events as they happen anywhere in the nation whether it is Washington, D.C. or a small town in Iowa. Moreover, we see in an up-close and personal way the effects that events have on the individuals involved.

There is also an immediacy to the news. News outlets vie to be first on the air with the latest story. CNN's Headline News is designed to keep us up-to-date around the clock, and the program is accessible worldwide. C-SPAN has made "Congress junkies" of a lot of people who have become almost addicted to watching committee meetings and floor debates as they are occurring.

Even though it is clear that the media provide an excellent linkage between the citizenry and government, it is also the case that many of us do not like everything we see and hear. The charges made against U.S. media range from liberal bias in reporting to sensationalism. Clearly, some of those complaints have merit and it will be interesting for you to explore them as you study this subject. You will also learn other aspects of how the media function in this society, such as the growing concern about concentration of media ownership and the effect of the high cost of media advertising on political campaigns.

THE POLITICAL ROLE OF THE MEDIA

Richard Ruderman

"You can either not read the newspapers and be uninformed or read the newspapers and be misinformed."

—Mark Twain

*"There's a smart young woman on a bright blue screen
Who comes into my house every night.
She takes all the reds, yellows, oranges, greens—
And changes them all into black and white."*

—Elvis Costello

As students of American history know, Thomas Jefferson rated the importance of a free press ahead of that of a free government. Odds are, they read it in a newspaper. But what is it about a free press—or the media generally—that supports and even supposedly transcends free government? To answer this question, we must first recognize and understand that the media are rarely if ever neutral, unbiased observers of events but are rather political players themselves, influencing political events, political actors, and even us citizens in a variety of ways.

"Media" means, literally, "in between." And the media, at least in free countries, like to think of themselves as something in between a people and its government. Unlike the media in authoritarian countries, the American media take pride in not merely mouthing the government line. And unlike certain newspapers from America's own past, today's media pride themselves on their supposed refusal to pander to popular, populist or majoritarian sentiment: we stand up, they claim, to popular opinion as well as to the government in order to bring out the truth. Like all go-betweens or messengers, the media thereby enjoy a certain power. When presenting the government's positions or workings to the people, they can slant or situate that position to garner or to undermine support for it. And in presenting—with the help of pollsters, usually employed by the media—the people's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs to the government, they can put pressure, this being a democracy, on the government to do or to forestall doing various things.

But the media do more than transmit information from the government to the people and vice versa. The media also act as a mirror in which the great body of the people, consisting of disparate and varied individuals and communities, can come to understand itself. "Human interest" stories, meant to illustrate and even to inspire democratic virtues, can—over time and when tending in one direction—help to redefine the character of a democratic people. In fact, some observers have suggested that the media's tireless quest to put a human face on the suffering and oppressed of the world has had the effect of making the media a kind of moral high priest, demanding the sacramental offering of "compassion" from its adherents (that would be you, gentle reader). Whether the media can, in the end, turn us into a more compassionate people is another question. Commentators today speak of the "CNN factor": so much compassion is demanded of us in our involvement with media (since the world's repertoire of horrors and atrocities seems endless) that we finally become morally exhausted, so to speak—unable to work up, yet again, a meaningful degree of compassion.

Finally, the media can be used (sometimes willingly: the chance to influence events plays a surprisingly powerful role in quieting the urge to pursue the truth wherever it may lead) by one branch

or quarter of the government to inform, pressure, or intimidate another. The government, remember, is not monolithic in America. Party government means that the parties sometimes use the separation of powers to advance party interests as much as to deliver good government. And federalism means that different levels of government sometimes feel the need to put pressure on another level. The media can sometimes become rather partisan in these quarrels. When, in 1975, the federal government refused to bail out financially troubled New York City, the *New York Post*, referring to then-President Ford, offered the headline: “Ford to City: Drop Dead!”

Nor, we must add, are the media monolithic in America. Not only are there “liberal” and “conservative” papers and TV talk shows, there are pronounced differences between the national, elite media and their local counterparts. The local media tend toward pieces that leave the viewer shocked, agitated, and indignant. Thus, crime stories are a staple and are used so frequently that the viewer of nothing but local news could be unaware that there has been a *steady decline* in crime throughout the 90’s. Also, because they must fit weather and sports into the same 30-minute slot, local newscasts tend not to supply much in the way of *analysis* of events. Local newspapers, for their part, are thought to have declined in the quality of their coverage of events as most American cities have become one-newspaper towns. For, while local papers have always been politically partisan, the absence of competition allows each paper to indulge its political leanings without fear of being challenged or corrected by its competitors. Many of you will be familiar with the *Dallas Morning News*, a newspaper whose Republican-leaning editorials are only amplified, and rarely balanced, by its roster of conservative columnists. Finally, it should be noted that the same media corporation is permitted to own a newspaper, a radio station, and a television station in the same market, enabling it to reinforce a single political view while giving the illusion of diversity of views.

The national media, better educated, better paid, and more influential, are another story. Political scientists Stanley Rothman and Robert Lichter have studied the political leanings of the elite media—the major newspapers and TV networks—for over 20 years and have found a consistent and pronounced liberal bias among them. A sizeable majority of reporters vote Democratic: at the extreme, in 1996, 93% of the reporters at the *Boston Globe* voted for Clinton. Bear in mind, however, that editors, publishers, and news directors tend to be Republican, if to a lesser degree. Of the most influential newspapers and newscasts, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *ABC*, *CBS*, and *NBC* are commonly considered Democratic-leaning; the *Wall Street Journal* and *Fox* are considered Republican-leaning. If the analysis that follows seems partisan to you, it may be because the political influence to be uncovered is so partisan to begin with.

As we have come to see once again recently, elections are an especially important time for citizens to keep a careful eye on the media. Pay particular attention to the timing, placement, and length of stories as well as to the political balance (or lack thereof) of the reporter’s sources. When, for example, the *New York Times* runs a story that relies for legal expertise on the very law professors who earlier submitted a paid ad supporting Al Gore, there is reason to doubt the story’s balance. Still, research indicates that the media’s influence on election outcomes is quite limited. It is on day-to-day political events and long-term views that the media’s influence is more evident.

As mentioned earlier, our democratic media pride themselves on being independent of both the government and the people. This sense of independence, however, can be compromised, sometimes severely, in both directions. While it is almost unheard of—at least since the outcry accompanying Jefferson’s support for libel laws to silence his critics in the early 1800’s—for the government to threaten or compel the media, it can do something just slightly less chilling: it can refuse reporters “access.” Access is to journalists what air is to human beings: without it, they die. In exchange for

access, however, journalists routinely elect to “go soft” on those government officials who supply it. Those officials who know how to dole out precious bits of information—especially if they can also help write the reporter’s story by supplying juicy “sound bites” as well—can buy themselves years of favorable and even adulatory press coverage. Henry Kissinger, President Nixon’s National Security Advisor and later his and President Ford’s Secretary of State, was an acknowledged master at this game. Similarly, rare is the media outlet prepared to examine fairly an unpopular, much less vilified cause—or to question a universally popular one. Thus, at the height of the anti-tobacco mood of the mid-1990’s, reports citing the risks of “second-hand” smoke were legion—despite the fact that some experts view the Pill as a more important factor than second-hand smoke in some cancers. And when a founding member of Greenpeace left the group, claiming that it undermined the cause by engaging in falsehoods, consumers of the mainstream media would be little the wiser about it. As the Elvis Costello quote above suggests, the media dislike any complexities that intrude on its preferred “hero and villain” storyline.

HOW TO READ A NEWSPAPER

In order to grasp the various ways that a newspaper takes a political role in its reporting of the news, we must first learn our way around a newspaper. Almost every part of the newspaper except for the weather section can play a political role, yet only one part admits to the fact. The most obviously political parts of a newspaper are the editorial and “Op-Ed” pages. The editorial page presents the paper’s own view of events, often taking the form of praise or criticism for the sitting President. Thus, the *New York Times* tends to praise Clinton and criticize Bush while the *Wall Street Journal* tends to do the opposite. Such columns, however Olympian and above-the-fray their tone, are readily understood by readers to be essentially partisan writings. Similarly, the Op-Ed page (originated in 1974 by the *New York Times*) presents writers—both a stable of regulars and a rotating roster of guests—who take more or less openly partisan positions on various issues of the day. These writers, however, usually aspire to more than merely preaching to the converted, as the editorial page does. They—or the only interesting ones among them—come to entertain the notion of *persuading* the thoughtful reader to adopt their positions. The thoughtful reader must then be alert to the wily arts of persuasion. More subtle and interesting is the technique perfected by Anthony Lewis, the liberal *New York Times* columnist. The tactic consists of finding a lone Republican who has broken from his party on an issue and then presenting his stance as a beacon of sanity in a sea of madness. The premise is that, if even a professional Republican can find his way to the truth, so then, dear reader, can you.

So far, however, we have only discussed the openly political parts of the newspaper. Far more insidious is the way in which newspapers can present “straight” news stories in such a way as to influence political events. Most obvious is the decision whether to run a story or not in the first place. When the media—or politicians—succeed in keeping a story off the front burner, political scientists speak of their having engaged in “non-decision-making” (denying us the opportunity to confront or evaluate the issue). Many newspapers “sat” on news of the Monica Lewinsky scandal until *Newsweek* finally broke the story, compelling them to cover it. Issues that can be embarrassing to the newspaper, or to its financial backers, or its advertisers, or to its ideological followers are most likely to be handled this way. Sometimes a story is simply too newsworthy to suppress, and so a newspaper will elect to “bury” it, either by putting it at the bottom of a rarely read page (the page before the editorial page is a favorite for this tactic) or by waiting until the Saturday edition (the least read daily newspaper) to publish it. Thus, the *New York Times* ran the story of Jesse Jackson having fathered a child out of wedlock on page 17 (of its Friday edition). Politicians, alert to these facts, do their best to release potentially

damaging information late on Friday afternoon. Of course, serious newspapers, in pursuit of a reputation for fairness, sometimes highlight stories they might otherwise have been expected to shun. The *New York Times*, for example, spent a great deal of time and money prominently pursuing the Clintons' "Whitewater" and "Travelgate" scandals.

Finally, the timing of a story is sometimes coordinated with the interests of the newspaper's preferred political candidate. Because presidential elections, for example, take place early in every fourth November, both candidates and newspapers like to pull "October Surprises" by releasing damaging facts (or allegations) about a candidate so late in the campaign that the candidate has no time for a rebuttal. (In the earliest widely noted example of this tactic, Henry Kissinger announced, in October of 1972, that peace was "at hand" in Viet Nam—a claim found, shortly after the election, won handily by Nixon, to have no basis whatever.) Conversely, a paper can (sometimes in collusion with government officials) withhold information that might *help* the "wrong" candidate. In the fall of 1992, officials in the Department of Labor (such bureaucrats lean Democratic) withheld until after the election statistics that showed the economy had been out of recession for the previous two quarters. Reporters for such publications as the *Times* put their investigative skills into "idle" until after the election—in which Clinton defeated the elder Bush, who had in the meantime been saddled with the albatross of "recession" until the end of the campaign. The good economic news was published three weeks after the election. Nor do such shenanigans end with the election. Despite the fact that the earnings gap was greater in the 90's than in the 80's, it was the earlier decade (during which, curiously enough, Republicans sat in the White House) that was labeled the "Greed" decade by the media. And, despite the fact that the level of homelessness in the U.S. has remained relatively steady for 20 years, we were given an eight year reprieve on stories about it during—you guessed it—the Clinton administration. (Exactly *one week* after George W. Bush's inauguration, the *Washington Post* ran a story on increased "signs" of homelessness.)

Stories can be written in various ways and situated in various contexts. Unfortunately, the media in general, and television news in particular, are not long on subtlety. What Elvis Costello refers to as "black and white" turns out, upon examination, to mean something like "David and Goliath": rather than being crude ideologues, slanting the news in obvious partisan fashion, reporters prefer to follow a story-line that pits a brave "underdog" against heartless greater powers. Such pre-written outlines save the reporter countless hours of thinking as well as give the reader an easy player to root for. This approach begins with the headline (which, it must be stressed, is rarely written by the author of the article). "Terrorists" can, with a stroke of the pen, be turned into "activists" whose victims "die" (in the passive voice) but who are in turn "killed" by the government that is presented as insensitive to their "frustrations."

The coverage of foreign affairs may give the media the greatest leeway for indulging itself at the expense of accurate reporting. Because so few Americans follow, or are knowledgeable about, foreign events, we rarely have any sense of when the media are slanting their reporting. As the Nobel Prize-winning novelist Saul Bellow once wrote, Americans often take a "moral vacation" when contemplating such vexed and vexing issues as the Middle East. That is, while our penchant for easy moralism is somewhat kept in check at home by the fact that *we* must be prepared to pay its costs, it can run riot at no cost to anyone but far-away foreigners when it comes to foreign affairs. And so, while no American citizen is ever asked to understand or sympathize with terrorists who act on our soil, Israeli citizens are routinely remonstrated to do so. The above-mentioned problem of "access," moreover, can take on more sinister hues in covering foreign affairs. Since Israel is an open democracy, reporters can operate in it with relatively few restrictions—not unlike those imposed by the U.S. or Great Britain—

and can criticize its government without fear. The Palestinian Authority, on the other hand, has shown itself ready to use threats, veiled and otherwise, against reporters who deviate from its preferred line. In the early days of the new “intifada,” a Palestinian mob lynched two Israeli soldiers, tearing them to pieces. Only one Italian news agency, however, was able to smuggle its video of the events past the Palestinian censors to show the news. So fearful of being cut off from all future news was the agency, however, that it wrote a public *apology* to the Palestinian Authority for having played its videotape of bloody-handed Palestinians posing for the camera. In this case, we must note, the American television networks did end up playing the tapes.

CONCLUSION

We began by noting that the media understand themselves to represent the interests of neither the government nor the people. Whose interests, then, do they represent? To some extent, of course, their own: the media require viewers and readers and try to present newsworthy stories in order to attract and retain them. But the elite media can be driven as much by their values as by the facts. Beginning from the professional premise that the “new” is better than the old, the media frequently find themselves preferring the new, the emergent, the progressive, to the status quo, the established, the traditional. Thus, as Rothman and Lichter have shown, members of the elite media (*The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *CNN*, *ABC*, *CBS*, *NBC*) have a more “liberal” view of issues and personalities than their counterparts in the business world or the population as a whole. While ex-*CBS* news anchor Walter Cronkite liked to sign off by saying “and that’s the way it is,” the top media players today are also influenced by “and this is the way it should be.” Rothman and Lichter have shown that the elite media want to lessen the influence of business leaders and religion, to advance the cause of diversity, and in general to keep the government out of private life but involved in economic redistribution.

To be sure, an ethic of professional responsibility encourages reporters to tell the truth as they can best determine it. But the “truth” commands less respect today than it used to. Journalists may be the most influential victims of the widespread postmodern denial of the “truth” in any objective sense. Only a generation ago, it would have been unthinkable to run a story based exclusively on “perceptions” (never supported with evidence) that the CIA was using white doctors to inject African-American babies with the HIV virus. Yet the *Chicago Tribune* did just that some years ago, as though “perceptions” were all that could be had of any subject. Moreover, journalists have developed a rather cynical view of “objectivity.” Rather than use it as a standard by which to evaluate the truth, they now use it as a cover for advancing the most partisan stories. As long as someone opposing the position taken by the story is quoted therein, journalists now think that they are acting responsibly.

Finally, the most demanding component of journalists’ professional ethic may be the need to meet deadlines. If news is to be presented “as it breaks,” all the time, round the clock, it should not be surprising if reporters come to dislike thoughtfulness and nuance—and to rely more and more on their conscious and unconscious biases. As Jack Beatty argues in the January 2001 issue of *The Atlantic*, reporters today simply haven’t the time or inclination to study issues. As a result, many of them are ill-prepared to challenge politicians’ questionable claims or to investigate complexities. (Beatty argues that this factor helped Bush and harmed Gore in the recent election.) Like so much else in the modern world, it has become incumbent upon us citizens to do much of the task (here, reporting of the news) ourselves. Only by returning to a story later, with the help of other, more serious media, can we hope to make progress in understanding a story or an issue. Only by taking full advantage of the Web, as

well as of the small but growing number of in-depth, analytical news-journals (such as *The American Prospect* and *The New Republic* on the left and *The Weekly Standard* and *The Public Interest* on the right), can we become aware of—or free ourselves from—the sometimes simple-minded and slanted coverage presented in *Newsweek*, *CNN*, and the *New York Times*.

SHOULD THERE BE SHIELD LAWS FOR REPORTERS?

Gloria C. Cox

CON
&
PRO

Members of the press will go to great lengths to find sources of information for stories they are researching. They may consult politicians, members of the business community, or just members of the general public. However, there are times when the information trail leads a journalist to sensitive sources such as agency whistle blowers, criminals or drug addicts, underworld figures, or persons who consider themselves at risk from others for revealing what they know. Many members of the press believe that *shield laws* should be adopted to protect their sources so that as journalists they will not be forced to reveal those sources, even if a prosecutor, judge, or other authority figure demands that the source of the information be identified. QUESTION: Should there be shield laws to protect reporters from having to reveal their sources to government officials?

YES! For many Americans through out history, including Thomas Jefferson, a free press is at the heart of a free society. Without it, there is little likelihood that the citizenry will find out much of what government does. That burden borne by the press to provide information and insight into the actions of government and government officials should entitle members of the press to special rights, including protection from having to reveal their sources.

Members of the press routinely explore as many sources as they can in their research on a story. They follow leads, even when the effort may contain some personal danger for them. They may have to promise anonymity to a person to persuade that individual to share what he or she knows. In many states, there is always the very real possibility that the reporter will be asked to reveal their sources to judges or other government officials. Journalists who refuse to reveal where their information came from may find themselves behind bars for contempt. For more than 150 years, journalists in the United States have faced that kind of threat. When government officials make such demands, the responsible journalist who promised to protect the identity of a source is faced with the terrible dilemma of betraying sources or going to jail for contempt of court.

The argument is often made that the Constitution does not actually contain any such explicit guarantees, which is true. However, the Supreme Court has examined many sections of the Constitution and interpreted them to include rights that are not specifically stated. Take, for instance, the various activities to which the freedom of press guarantee has been applied. The Constitution does not actually say that free press applies in any way to advertisements that may appear in newspapers, but the right has been so interpreted. The Supreme Court could, if its members so chose, interpret the phrase providing freedom of the press to include such special rights for the press as guaranteed access beyond those to which ordinary citizens are entitled as well as the right of a reporter to protect a source.

Some would also argue that in a democracy, journalists and government are not in any sort of adversarial situation, so no special rights are necessary. That claim is easily disputed by a look at the record. Jailing a reporter on a contempt charge for refusing to reveal sources goes back to 1840 (Epstein and Walker, 1992:221) with many examples since then. More recently, courts have recognized the importance of having reliable, protected sources, as in the case of *Riley v. City of Chester*, 1979. In the words of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals: "...the relationship between news gathering, news dissemination, and the need for a journalist to protect his or her source is too apparent to require belaboring."

Currently, twenty-nine states have enacted shield laws of their own and several others provide protection of some degree to journalists (Yeric). Proper attention to freedom of the press leads us to believe that such laws are fundamental to protecting our best interests.

NO! While more than half the states have chosen to enact shield laws, which they are free to, such laws are clearly unjustified and perhaps even inimical to the public interest. As we are all well aware, the press seems to have an enormous amount of power, as evidenced by reports about virtually every celebrity, not to mention public officials and ordinary citizens. And the American press enjoys freedoms that are unprecedented, even in other democratic nations such as the United Kingdom. England, for example, constrains the press to a much greater degree than the United States, providing stiff penalties when the media print information about criminal cases prior to trial. To give the press additional special rights would be to further embolden a press corps that has already run rampant over the private lives of public officials and that chooses to sensationalize much of what it learns in its "investigations."

A very powerful argument is that shield laws, however well they may serve journalists, do not serve the public interest. Journalists would like to have us believe that it is in the public interest that they not be subject to account for the source of their information when a grand jury or prosecutor wants to talk about what has been reported. However, I would argue that shield laws serve only to protect journalists who want to protect persons who have an operation of some kind to lose if their identity is made public. The drug dealer talks to the reporter on promise that the dealer's location is not disclosed. The journalist assumes that the public will find the thoughts of the drug dealer to be interesting, and that may well be the case, but the public interest would be better served by having the drug dealer arrested and incarcerated. No doubt the journalist is correct in asserting that some sources of information would dry up, but it isn't at all clear to me that the tradeoff works in the direction of the public interest.

In fact, this issue has already reached the Supreme Court for consideration in the 1972 case of *Branzburg v. Hayes*. The case involved a reporter for a Kentucky newspaper who had seen men making hashish. When the reporter was called to testify before a grand jury about what he had seen, he declined to answer, asserting a right as a reporter to protect his sources. The ruling of the Supreme Court in this case is most enlightening.

The Supreme Court acknowledges the importance of a free press, but reminds journalists that they are still free to consult whatever source they wish in whatever manner they wish to consult. As Justice White wrote for the court: *The use of confidential sources by the press is not forbidden or restricted; reporters remain free to seek news from any source by means within the law. No attempt is made to require the press to publish its sources of information or indiscriminately to disclose them on request.*

Given that journalists generally do not have to disclose their sources, under what circumstances are they compelled to do so? The answer is quite clear: when there is a public interest that overrides the reporter's interest in not revealing his or her sources. While on an ordinary story the government has no interest in knowing who provided the information, there are occasions when the reporter's information, as well as his or her sources, is needed. That means testifying at a grand jury hearing or perhaps at a trial. As the court points out, very few persons have been accorded such a privilege. In the words of Justice White: "*...the longstanding principle [of the grand jury] is that the publichas a right to every man's evidence.*" In the *Branzburg* case, the Supreme Court rejected the reporter's plea for special rights and instead upheld the requirement that he appear before the grand jury to answer questions just as any other citizen would be required to do.

As with every right in a free society, we are constantly struggling to balance the rights of one with another. It seems clear that journalists enjoy enormous freedom in the United States. It is also equally clear that occasions can arise, although infrequently, where the interest of another person or society itself outweighs the interest of the reporter. Shield laws not only seem unnecessary but also downright misguided and fraught with dangerous possibilities. Let's continue to reject any effort to enact a federal shield law and work to dismantle state laws that appear vulnerable.

ANALYZING THE NEWSPAPER

For one week, choose and try to follow one topic of interest to you in a variety of media outlets. Be sure to monitor one of the nightly national newscasts (on *ABC*, *CBS*, or *NBC*), one of the major newsmagazines (*Time*, *Newsweek*, or *U.S. News & World Report*), one of the major national newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, or *The Wall Street Journal*), and two (one from the left, one from the right) political opinion journals (*The American Prospect* or *The New Republic* on the left, and *The Weekly Standard* or *The Public Interest*—the latter a quarterly—on the right). When your research is complete, answer the questions below.

1. Did any one of the media outlets fail to report the story (it must have appeared in all the others to merit inclusion in this study)? Can you hazard a guess as to why?

2. Did the story have notable advantages or disadvantages to either of the major political parties?

3. Were essentially the same *facts* included in all versions of the story? Did any of the media outlets include or exclude a relevant fact, thereby changing the “slant” of the story?

4. Did any of the media outlets betray the assumption of any relevant *values*? That is, did it assume, explicitly or implicitly, the goodness or badness of the issue in question (e.g., the freedom to smoke in public places)?

5. Is there any sign that one or more of the subjects in the story might have exercised influence on the way the story was framed? To what apparent purpose?

6. Count the people and organizations cited as sources or observers by the journalist or reporter. Were they a fair representation of the spectrum of political opinion?

BONUS: Do some additional research on the topic (which will presumably be one that particularly interests you). You might know of books, web sites, in-depth scholarly journals, etc., that can provide a rich background for understanding the issue in question. Based on this knowledge, offer a general assessment of the quality of a few of the media outlets studied. Was the story more or less accurate? Did it miss any essential factors? Did it subtly “slant” the story in any way?

NAME

SEAT NO.

SCORE

YOUR THOUGHTS ON SHIELD LAWS AN EXERCISE FOR CLASSROOM OR GROUP DISCUSSION

In each scenario below, the journalist is called before a grand jury investigating an issue related to the story written by the reporter. The grand jury has the role of investigating activities that may be unethical or criminal in nature and deciding whether or not charges should be brought against those involved. In each case below, decide whether you believe the reporter should have to reveal his or her sources to the grand jury. Mark yes or no for each question and summarize your reasoning in the space provided.

1. A reporter interviews seven middle school students who profess to taking guns or knives to school on a regular basis.

_____ Yes _____ No Reasoning: _____

2. A reporter talks to the wife of a well-known, longtime public official. She talks about how stressful her role is, including concerns about her husband's health, untrustworthy people around her husband, and the stress of having the full-time care of the family that falls to her.

_____ Yes _____ No Reasoning: _____

3. The reporter endeavors to get to the bottom of a drug cartel that appears to dominate the drug trade in a major American city. Through a series of special approaches and some foolhardiness, the reporter makes contact with the drug kingpin, who agrees to an interview at his hideaway. The reporter is blindfolded for the trip, but the blindfold is removed for the interview.

_____ Yes _____ No Reasoning: _____

4. The reporter has discovered that within the gay and lesbian community, "marriage" ceremonies for same-sex couples are being performed by community leaders. These ceremonies do not have the force of law since same-sex marriage is illegal in the state, but the reporter finds a fascinating story as she witnesses the ceremonies and talks to participants about their view of a system that they believe is biased against them.

_____ Yes _____ No Reasoning: _____

5. In each of the three situations below, the reporter has gained access to the inner circle of a group that is active in the city in which his or her newspaper is located. The grand jury wants to know the names of as many individuals as possible in the group.

- A. Because of racial tensions within the local school district, a group calling itself the New Black Panthers has formed. Its members, armed with rifles, sometimes attend events.

_____ Yes _____ No Reasoning: _____

- B. In the large expanse of rural area nearby, several militia groups establish headquarters where they regularly train their members in military strategy and tactics. Members of the militia believe that the United Nations is about to take over the United States and their job as militia members will be to defend the nation.

_____ Yes _____ No Reasoning: _____

- C. A community development group is formed when the city refuses to spend federally allocated funds on programs that will directly benefit the community. Instead, funds are routinely siphoned off to big business in an effort to create jobs by bringing in firms from abroad.

_____ Yes _____ No Reasoning: _____

NAME

SEAT NO.

SCORE

American politics and television are now so completely locked together that it is impossible to tell the story of the one without the other (p. 165).

[illegible]

NAME _____

SCORE

EXERCISE 3-4

THE McLAUGHLIN GROUP

There is no shortage of political talk shows on television, but one with which you may not be familiar is a PBS series called The McLaughlin Group. The show airs on local public television stations on the weekends, but it is also available on the web—complete with voices, quotes, and survey results. The address is <http://www.mclaughlin.com/index2htm>. You may watch the show on television or visit the web site to answer the questions below.

1. _____ What is the host's full name?
2. _____ Name three regular panelists on the program.

3. _____ Did you watch the program on television or visit the web site?
4. _____ On what date?
5. _____ What was the #1 issue of the week?
6. Give a brief summary of the key points discussed.

7. List two other topics discussed on this week's program:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
8. What was the survey issue of the week?

9. What were the survey results?

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EXERCISE 3-5

THE FREEDOM FORUM

Find out about the Freedom Forum at <http://www.freedomforum.org>, then answer the questions below. If you have trouble with the web address, search the web for the Freedom Forum.

1. How does the Freedom Forum identify itself and its purpose?

2. What are some of the projects in which the Freedom Forum is engaged?

- A.

- B.

- C.

- D.

- E.

3. What is the Newseum?

4. Take a virtual tour of the Newseum.

- a. What are some of the artifacts on display in the News History Gallery?

- b. What is the Video News Wall?

5. The Freedom Forum is interested in various issues involving the First Amendment. The issues that are in the news will change from time to time. Check on the stories that are featured at the time you prepare this exercise and answer the questions below.

In this space, summarize five issues that are currently of interest to members of the Freedom Forum:

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____

Select the issue that interests you most and read the whole story on that issue. Summarize your findings in the space below:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

THE VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY NEWS ARCHIVES

This exercise also involves research on the World Wide Web. Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, maintains an extensive archive of television news programs. Locate the site at <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/abstracts.html>. At this site you will find that Vanderbilt has maintained the evening news broadcasts of the three major networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) since August 5, 1968. Provided below are five dates that you are to search. List three stories from each of those dates. You may use any of the three networks, but specify which one you selected.

1. JULY 18, 1969

Lead Story: _____

Other Story: _____

2. AUGUST 9, 1974

Lead Story: _____

Other Story: _____

3. JANUARY 20, 1981

Lead Story: _____

Other Story: _____

4. DECEMBER 21, 1988

Lead Story: _____

Other Story: _____

5. YOUR BIRTHDAY Date

Lead Story: _____

Other Story: _____

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL PARTIES

IN BRIEF, the current Democratic party can trace its origins directly back to Andrew Jackson in the 1820s and possibly to Thomas Jefferson a full two centuries ago. Today's Republican party began as a coalition of groups opposed to the spread of slavery. The first Republican president, Lincoln, was elected in 1860 amidst disarray and division among Democrats.

Chances are high that you have already developed a sense of identification with one of these two parties, although that is by no means a certainty. Claiming to be a political independent has grown in popularity in recent decades, even though independents are less likely than party members to be politically aware and active. Unfortunately, for many people, independence from political parties also means lack of interest in issues and candidates.

Although our two major parties have weathered national and international events for many decades, we have not been without efforts to replace them. Ross Perot's name appeared on the presidential ballot as a third party candidate in 1992 and 1996. In 1968, segregationist George Wallace shocked many Americans by winning votes not only in five southern states, but elsewhere, too. Another segregationist, J. Strom Thurmond, now the oldest U.S. senator, ran for the presidency in 1948 as the States Rights candidate. The Dixiecrats, as party followers were called, also won five states in the South, a feat accounted for mainly by the fact that those states omitted Truman's name from the ballot. The glorious and inglorious campaigns of would-bes and want-to-bes provide interesting reading for students of political history.

THE NATURE OF OUR POLITICAL PARTIES

Frank Feigert

"If I could not go to heaven but with a party I would not go there at all."—attributed to Thomas Jefferson.

"I wasn't prepared for the depth of the fury, the bigotry and the sexism my candidacy...would unleash..."—Geraldine Ferraro, commenting on her 1984 candidacy for the vice presidency on the ticket headed by Walter Mondale. Quoted in Nancy E. McGlen's and Karen O'Connor's book Women, Politics, and American Society.

"The presumption of Democratic victory in Texas is no longer valid....The Republican party of the 1990s has demonstrated the will and the ability to compete with Democrats in all elections."—John Todd in his book Texas Politics: The Challenge of Change.

"I don't belong to any organized political party—I'm a registered Democrat."—Will Rogers, Humorist.

DEFINING POLITICAL PARTIES

Are parties just interest groups or "pressure groups?" Both parties and groups have a political agenda and organize to put that agenda into law. However, there is a clear distinction between the two. Parties are on the ballot, and sponsor candidates for political office. Interest groups are not on the ballot, but try to influence public policy in other ways. From this you might (mistakenly) conclude that parties are not concerned with public policy, but nothing could be further from the truth. Parties are interested in policy, and stress their differences with each other in this regard, in order to win. However, parties *have access to and use of the ballot*, whereas interest groups do not.

A further useful distinction can be found in the extent to which these two types of organizations, political parties and interest groups, dwell on a single issue or set of related issues, as compared to a broad variety of issues. Interest groups, for the most part, necessarily focus on a single issue or issue cluster. In the debate on health care, for instance, the American Medical Association is a major player, but it has nothing to say about national energy policy. Parties, especially as they are represented in Congress and the presidency, deal with health, energy, defense, foreign affairs, and many other issues.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAJOR AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Major American parties (i.e., the Democrats and Republicans) have certain defining characteristics. These can be described fairly quickly. American parties are:

- A. *Open*—there is no test of membership in a really formal sense. If you want to call yourself a Democrat or Republican, you are a Democrat or Republican. Please note that, while you may justifiably call yourself an Independent, there is really no such thing as a continuing and organized

party called “Independent.” Unlike many European countries, there is no official sponsorship or dues-paying basis of American parties. Of course, if you wish to vote in the nominating primary of your party here in Texas, you must tell the voting officials which party you belong to, and they stamp your card with the name of one of the two parties. This means that you cannot vote in the primary of the other party for two years. In those states that require a declaration of party preference, voters who declare themselves Independents are deprived of a choice, since there is no primary for the nonexistent Independent party. In Texas and some other states, Independents may choose to participate in either party’s primary for the purpose of helping to select candidates for the general election.

- B. *Decentralized*—Although there is a formal structure for each party, the federal system means that each state has its own Democratic and Republican parties, each of which operates relatively independently of their national committees and of their county and local committees as well. In short, there is no real command structure within American parties. We describe them not in terms of hierarchy, where there is centralized decision-making from above, but with a different term—*stratarchy*. By this we mean that each level (stratum) of the party operates relatively independently of others above and below them. Hence, although President Clinton was nominally the head of the Democrats from 1993-2001, this fact did not give him the power to command state party leaders and governors or even his fellow Democrats in Congress. Instead, he had to rely on persuasion.
- C. *Non-ideological and Centrist*—Many people think of ideology as the basis of American parties, but you might want to be cautious about drawing such conclusions. Certainly, there seems to be a high ideological basis for parties in Texas, especially factions in the Democratic party. Although you may want to attach labels such as “liberal” and “conservative” to one or the other party, neither party can long afford to be perceived as ideologically extreme for a simple reason—the votes are not often at either end of the ideological spectrum, but toward the middle. Certainly, the Democrats are, at least at the national level and in most states, somewhat more liberal than are the Republicans. But, a party that is successfully depicted as ideologically extreme will ultimately lose. Hence, Presidents Reagan and Bush took a conservative posture on many issues, but evidence strongly suggests that theirs were personal and not ideological victories.

While ideological activists have taken over a party from time to time (e.g., the Goldwater Republicans, McGovern Democrats, Reagan Republicans), this has tended to be of a short-term nature. Of great interest now has been the extent to which the Republican party has been influenced by the movement generally known as the Christian Right. Most prominent in the movement has been a rapidly growing organization, now in the several hundred thousands in membership, under the leadership of Reverend Pat Robertson. The Christian Coalition, as it is called, has the goal of putting its members into various offices. It has strongly influenced the Republican Party in more than three dozen states.

- D. *Programmatic and Flexible*—Despite trying to avoid ideological positions, the parties do take and hold positions on issues. They develop programs in response to public needs and where they sense the votes might be. In the debate on health policy, for instance, neither Republicans nor Democrats will outright oppose a national health policy. It is now a given that the voters want and will support some sort of health policy. However, each party has and will develop modifications to plans—even

those developed by their own leaders. They do so in order to remain flexible, not committing themselves to something (until maybe at the very last moment) that will not be acceptable to both their principles as well as to that sense of where the votes might be. Consider the Christian Coalition mentioned above. What programs do you think they might advance? How willing will they be to compromise?

- E. *Coalitions*—As stated above, interest groups tend to focus on a single issue or a set of related issues. If they are to win, political parties must pull together a wide variety of opinions on a wide variety of issues. This is the so-called “big tent” strategy that the late Lee Atwater, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, attempted to pursue. He recognized that a party must be a coalition in order to win on a variety of issues as well as in elections. This means that the party must accommodate a variety of economic, social, and geographical positions on numerous issues. It often seems impossible to some that Northern and Southern Democrats can be in the same party, but they seem to feel more comfortable with each other than they would by bolting to the Republicans.

However, consider again the implications of the Christian Coalition “taking over” the Republican party, as some see it. Will they make others, less moderate and fervent than they, feel welcome under a “big tent”? Will more moderate activists and voters try to “recapture” their party and, if they do, with what results and implications? Would some moderate Republicans even desert, however temporarily, to the Democrats?

PARTY FUNCTIONS

Political parties perform several important functions in our political system. These are:

1. *Nominating candidates*: selecting people to run for public office;
2. *Structuring the voting choice*: making it easier for voters to decide by narrowing the choices and making selection more manageable;
3. *Proposing alternative government programs*: letting voters see another way of accomplishing the same thing;
4. *Coordinating the actions of government officials*: often called “bridging the separation of powers,” by working out common approaches between congressional members of the president’s party and the White House.

In addition to these four functions, there really is another function that becomes the most important one:

5. *WINNING PUBLIC OFFICE*: Unless a party has a reasonable chance to win office, and a substantial number of office-holders, the other functions become more difficult to perform. Bear in mind that there is a too-common tendency to focus only on executive offices such as the presidency and the governor’s office. A party can lose such an office for a considerable period of time (e.g., the Republicans lost the presidency five straight times, 1932-1948; the Democrats lost the presidency three straight times, 1980-1988) and still survive, performing other functions successfully, only because it still has members in Congress.

THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM AND TEXAS

America can be described as having had a two-party system since early in the nineteenth century. However, since 1860 when Lincoln and the Republicans won the presidency, the American political

system has been dominated by the same two major parties. The two parties, Democrats and Republicans, have typically received at least 90% of the vote, dividing that within a 60%-40% range. One or the other party has always been able to achieve a majority in either house of Congress. With the 2000 election, however, it produced a 50-50 split in the Senate.

Does Texas fit this model? Is the Lone Star State a two-party system? In order to answer this question, we have to define the period of time to which we might wish to apply the term. Following Reconstruction (1872), Texas was clearly a one-party Democratic state. Often, Republicans did not even bother to contest elections, since winning was a foregone conclusion for the Democratic candidate. We had a totally Democratic state government, including the governor and all members of the state legislature until 1962, when one Republican was finally elected to the lower house. The election of John Tower to the U.S. Senate in a special 1961 election signaled the beginning of a credible statewide GOP effort showing that Republicans could run and win.

However, if we were to look at only the present and the very recent past, one might come to the conclusion that we are, indeed, a two-party state, or even a Republican state. We have a GOP governor and two GOP U.S. senators, and have not given a Democrat our electoral college votes for president since Carter in 1976. Yet, within that same time frame, we have alternated our choice for governor from Republican (1978, 1986, 1994, 1998) to Democrat (1982, 1990), and some degree of alternation is usually taken as a hallmark of two-party systems.

It is in the state legislature's makeup that we can see both the continuing presence of the Democratic party, as well as the slow and incremental progress that the GOP has been making. From the lonely Republican first elected in 1962, the GOP has been able to slowly build its forces up to 72 Republicans out of 150 members of the House and 16 Republicans out of 31 in the Senate, a majority. In practical terms, it means that the GOP can now sustain Republican Governor Perry's veto, since a two-thirds vote is necessary to override.

How can this increased strength of the Republicans be explained? We have already mentioned one source, and that was the election in 1961 of the first statewide GOP officeholder, John Tower. His election was exceptional in several respects, not the least of which was that he was the only prominent Republican on a ballot that had 70 others, thereby making it possible for him to get into the run-off or second primary, which he barely won. Nonetheless, that election and his several subsequent re-elections proved that voters would accept a legitimate Republican as an alternative to other, equally conservative but Democratic, candidates. From this slowly grew a Republican organization that could back others who wished to mount serious efforts at contesting the long-term Democratic monopoly.

However, and more seriously, it is apparent that a great many Texas voters still have a strong sense of allegiance to the Democratic party, at least at the less visible level of state and local offices. This could either be a "last redoubt" or stronghold for the Democrats, or there could be another interpretation. This one would hold that the Democrats, who could long take the state's voters for granted, at least have a solid base on which to build for future elections. Supporting this view is a study that shows something of the level to which each party has been able to organize. In 1990, the GOP had leaders in barely more than 50% of the state's voting precincts, while the Democrats were staffed at a level of better than 75%, much closer to the national average. This suggests that neither party is overly strong in an organizational sense, but that the Democrats still have the edge in this regard. Hence, while the most visible offices in the state are currently in Republican hands, it would seem that a more sober assessment would conclude that the state is presently a two-party state in the process of transformation.

SOURCES

McGlen, Nancy E. and Karen O'Connor. 1995. Women, Politics, and Society. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Todd, John R. 1996. Texas Politics: The Challenge of Change. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

DO WE NEED A THIRD PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES?

Frank Feigert

Since our present two-party system emerged, there has always been discontent with what the parties offer us by way of choice as well as results. On the one hand, there is the Alice-in-Wonderland argument of Tweedle-Dee versus Tweedle-Dum, suggesting that, in the words of George Wallace, the 1968 candidate of the American Independent Party, there isn't "a dime's worth of difference" between Democrats and Republicans. Very much in contrast with this is the view that the parties are so polarized, so unlike each other, that discord stops anything effective from being done. Interestingly, each position receives support of some 40% in the Gallup Poll. Clearly, there is *some* discontent in the American public, but there is also strong disagreement whether a third party is the solution to whatever ails us.

YES!

Support for third parties has always been present in the United States. Scarcely an election goes by when, at least at the presidential level, we don't see several dozen minor parties make an appearance, if only as a protest against the two major parties. Indeed, our present party system was shaped by the fact that the Republicans, founded just six years earlier in 1854, won the presidency in 1860 under Lincoln in a four-party election.

But, while they have not done well historically, they *have* received support. And in recent years, such support has become more evident. In 1980, independent John Anderson, a former Republican member of the House of Representatives, made an under-funded attempt at the presidency and achieved some 8% of the vote in the race dominated by Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter. Twelve years later, Ross Perot received about 19% of the vote in one of the more bizarre campaigns in history. Initial polls showed that he had a distinct chance at capturing the presidency. Then, on July 16, he bowed out of the race, later claiming that Republicans had been planning to sabotage his daughter's wedding. As if this was not enough, he re-entered the race on October 1, with less than five weeks to go, and polls indicated that a majority thought he had "won" the first debate with Bush and Clinton. In this election, turnout increased for the first time since 1960, from 50% to 55%, and it can be argued that Perot's candidacy accounted for a good deal of the increased participation. Against this backdrop, despite (or because?) he was in the news for four years, Perot's United We Stand America could garner only 8% of the vote in the 1996 election. At the very least, we can say that a significant share of the American electorate is not satisfied with the choices given them by the two major parties.

Underlying all of this is the basic question of the responsiveness of elected officials to the public. It can be argued that the two-party system makes candidates more responsive to what they see as the broad middle of their constituencies; hence, they play it safe in terms of their own re-election chances. But, that middle is often uninformed and apathetic. And, there is the indisputable fact that, since

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1960, our voting participation has been in a general downward trend. Indeed, turnout in the 1996 election fell to 49%, the lowest since 1924, when women were just beginning to exercise their newly-won right to vote. Clearly, for whatever reasons, many Americans do not see either of the two major parties as sufficiently representative of their interests that they are willing to go to the polls to support one or the other. Offering the voters a third choice, whether in the middle or to the left or right, could lead to increased turnout. And, a third party, newly-installed in government, would do everything possible to prove more representative of both its own constituency as well as the larger population.

NO! Popular support for third parties can be viewed another way: support for them is low, and it has almost always been low. In this century the only times a third party has exceeded 10% of the vote have been 1912 (Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive or "Bull Moose" Party—27.4%); 1924 (Robert La Follette's Progressive Party—16.6%), 1968 (George Wallace's American Independent Party—13.5%); and 1992 (Ross Perot's independent candidacy—18.9%). As a footnote to 1992, 20 other third-party candidates were listed on at least one state ballot. In the 2000 election, there were 16 such candidates. There is *no* reason to believe that this low support would necessarily increase because a third party emerged in some or even all future elections.

This is not to argue that the two-party system is perfect, by any means. But, it *can* be considered broadly representative in many ways. And, it is foolish to argue that those voters who have become cynical because they think their interests are unrepresented would necessarily achieve representation by virtue of a third party being on the ballot. Consider the question of demographics, for example. One of the great problems of the electoral system, and of parties in particular, is that those whose interests would best be served by political participation, by voting in other words, participate the least. Can we assume that a party of the young, the poor, and minorities would necessarily fare well at the polls? Of course not. Or, would there be a new Formerly Cynical Party?

There is the added problem of the level of office for which third parties might contend. Historically, most third parties have focused exclusively on the presidency, ignoring Congress and the many state and local offices for which they might contend. Assume for a moment that a third-party president was indeed elected under such circumstances, and had to face a Congress controlled by one of the two major parties (and populated exclusively by those members, as has been the historic norm). If presidents normally rely on their party members in Congress to help pass legislation, a third-party president would have no working majority at all, and passage of the presidential agenda would be very difficult indeed. As an illustration of this, there have been two independent governors (Maine and Connecticut) in recent years, and each was frustrated by an absence of support in his legislature. In other words, popular support for a third-party president or governor would not necessarily translate into political support in the legislative body.

But, you might ask, what if a third-party were to organize at lower levels, at least down through Congress? Under our electoral system, it would be conceivable for a member of the House or Senate to win with just 34%, hardly a mandate of any sort. Assume that each chamber had a substantial number of the third-party president's fellow party members. The president could automatically gain *some* support, but would it be enough? A majority is still needed to pass legislation, and it would be reasonable to expect some genuinely hard opposition from members of the two present parties, perhaps operating together against the newcomers.

Or—worse yet—consider the impact of a strong third-party movement on the Electoral College. Since 34% could be enough to “win” a state's electoral votes, does this mean that a president could be elected without a popular majority? President Clinton was twice elected without a majority, and his difficulty in gaining support from Congress may, at least partially, be attributed to this. Or, if there is no majority at all in the Electoral College, the House would have to choose a new president, but on what basis would each member vote in determining his or her state's vote? Party? State winner? National winner? The problems would be many. And, even if we abolished the Electoral College system, we would necessarily elect future presidents without majorities, and that could cripple the presidency. In short—“if it ain't broke, don't fix it.”

Third parties are positive forces in the U.S. political system even when their candidates are unable to win elections.

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THE POLITICAL PARTIES OF TEXAS

Both the Democratic and Republican parties of Texas maintain web sites with a great deal of information about the party. If your last name begins with A-M, visit the Republican Party's web site to answer the questions below. If your last name begins with N-Z, visit the Democratic Party's web site to answer these questions.

1. Which party's web page did you visit?

2. Browse through the material available at the web site and read those items that seem to be related to the party's values. Assuming that you know nothing else about the party, write a brief paragraph detailing at least three values and/or themes emphasized by the party.

3. Each party wants to tout its own successes and a web page is an excellent way to emphasize what the party views as its strong points. What is the party you are researching claiming as its recent victories?

4. Judging by the information on the web site, who would you say are important leaders of the party at this time?

5. Each site also seems to contain information that could readily be construed as negative about the other party. Look for that kind of information and give your assessment of what you found.

6. Suppose you want to reach the top official of each party. Provide the name, address, and telephone number below.

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MASTERING IMPORTANT FACTS

Some important terms are presented below, with several statements following each term. Mark each statement with T if it is True, F if it is False. You will need to consult another source, such as your textbook, to complete this exercise.

1. POLITICAL PARTY

- ☐ The two-party system is common to all nations with democratic government.
- ☐ Parties in the United States used to be more powerful than they are now.
- ☐ American voters tend to switch their party identification many times during their lifetime and show very little party loyalty.
- ☐ Political parties and interest groups are the same, except that parties are always bigger and better organized than interest groups.
- ☐ Political parties were unknown in the United States until 1850 when they began in response to disagreements about slavery.

2. PARTY PLATFORM

- ☐ Political parties write a new platform each year.
- ☐ Presidential candidates usually run on their party's platform.
- ☐ A platform is a statement of the party's views on various public issues.

3. DEMOCRATIC, REPUBLICAN PARTIES

- ☐ The Democratic party enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the South from the Civil War until about 1964.
- ☐ Franklin Roosevelt forged a powerful coalition of supporters for the Democratic party when he was in office.
- ☐ More voters identify with the Democratic party than with the Republican party.

- _____ Andrew Jackson is usually considered to be the founder of the Republican party.
- _____ The Republican party was founded in opposition to the spread of slavery.
- _____ The Republican party is the older of the two major parties.
- _____ The Republican party dominated the presidency from 1860-1932.
- _____ GOP is a standard abbreviation for the Democratic party.

4. PARTY IDENTIFICATION

- _____ Members of minority groups tend to be strong supporters of the Republican party.
- _____ Well over one-half of U.S. voters adopt the political party favored by their parents.
- _____ Persons with less education and low incomes tend to prefer the Democratic party over the Republican party.
- _____ Women are more likely than men to favor the Democratic party.

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IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

The questions below provide an opportunity for you to review important ideas discussed in the chapter essay.

1. How are political parties different from interest groups?

2. Why are our major political parties described as *decentralized*?

3. How do parties survive when they lose the presidency for several terms?

4. Identify two reasons why, nationally, we have a two-party system:

- a.

- b.

5. Identify two reasons why, in Texas, we might have a two-party system:

- a.

- b.

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[illegible]

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

[illegible]

EXERCISE 4-6

CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS

This exercise is a review of important concepts and facts in this chapter. Please answer each question below in the blank provided.

1. _____ Political parties differ from interest groups primarily in that
 - A. parties run candidates for office in hopes of controlling the government.
 - B. interest groups are not permitted by law to raise funds for campaigns.
 - C. interest groups are concerned with the process of elections, but not with candidates or their positions on issues.
 - D. political parties are government-supported.
2. _____ The purpose of the party primary is to
 - A. select candidates for the general election.
 - B. build support and raise money for the party.
 - C. elect party members to public office.
 - D. pick the party's slate for the Electoral College.
3. _____ If you vote in one party's primary in Texas, you cannot vote in the other party's primary
 - A. ever.
 - B. for at least one year.
 - C. for at least two years.
 - D. for at least five years.
4. _____ If you are an Independent voter in Texas, you will usually
 - A. be able to vote in either the Democratic or Republican primary.
 - B. not be able to vote in a party primary.
 - C. be able to vote in both the Democratic and Republican primaries.
 - D. be required to pick one of the two major parties anyway, just to be permitted to register to vote.
5. _____ *Stratarchy* can best be defined as
 - A. a strict hierarchy within parties.
 - B. each level of the party operating rather independently of others above and below.
 - C. authority from the top down in party management.
 - D. authority from the bottom toward the top.
6. _____ A politician who wants to win the presidency should position himself/herself on issues
 - A. at one of the extremes, either very liberal or conservative.
 - B. in the middle where most of the voters are.
 - C. wherever his/her principles lead, regardless of the voters.
 - D. ahead of others, defining new issues for the public.

7. _____ Atwater's "big tent" strategy was an effort to
- A. confine the Republican party to those people who shared common beliefs.
 - B. form a coalition of voters who shared the same general philosophy but disagreed on certain specific policies.
 - C. oust from the party all the people who did not share the party's view on abortion.
 - D. focus the party on certain key principles so as to strengthen those principles.
8. _____ Which of the following groups has been accused of taking over the Republican party in some states in recent years?
- A. the Christian Coalition
 - B. the National Rifle Association
 - C. the National Association of Manufacturers
 - D. the Environmental Defense Fund
9. _____ Of the following party functions, which is the most important?
- A. proposing programs to accomplish certain policy objectives
 - B. nominating candidates for office
 - C. winning public office
 - D. structuring the voting choice
10. _____ How would the party preference of Texans right now best be described? Texas:
- A. remains a solidly Democratic state.
 - B. remains, as it has been for many decades, a Republican state.
 - C. is a two-party state, leaning toward the Republican party.
 - D. is a two-party state, leaning toward the Democratic party.

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ANALYZING FALSE STATEMENTS

Each of the following statements is false. Please use the space provided to explain *why* each is false.

1. The main role of interest groups is to find favorable candidates to run for office.

2. If you are an Independent, you are a member of a clearly defined and fairly powerful political party.

3. The national party leader is a powerful figure who can direct local party leaders to do whatever he or she wants done.

4. When political parties structure the voter's choice, they make it harder for voters to make their political decisions.

5. The American two-party system is a relatively recent invention; it dates from the 1930s and Franklin Roosevelt's presidency.

6. Texas has been a strongly Republican state since the end of the Civil War.

7. Texas has always been a two-party state.

8. Almost all Texas governors have been Republicans.

9. When Democrats get elected in Texas today, it is for the highest offices, such as senator, representative and governor.

10. While the Christian Coalition seeks to influence policy, it does not concern itself with elections and the question of who holds office.

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CHAPTER 5

INTEREST GROUPS

IN BRIEF, interest groups that seek benefits for their members with apparent disregard for the way the larger public interest is affected have always concerned public officials and political scientists. The problem is the same as Madison expressed it in *Federalist #10*: should a well-organized, well-funded interest group be able to achieve its policy goals at the expense of other groups or the common good?

Interest groups suffer from a somewhat negative reputation in the minds of many Americans. There is the perception, which is probably fairly accurate, that interest groups are effective in getting what they want a good bit of the time. Their goals are well-articulated and backed by significant contributions to influential members of Congress, while our interests are not so well tended.

Even the methods of interest groups are viewed negatively. Many people visualize lobbyists as people who carry large sums of money so they will be ready to hand it over in bundles to members of Congress who are in a position to influence legislation of importance to the interest group. In your study of interest groups, you will learn that the methods of groups are a great deal more sophisticated than that and tend to involve rather dull activities, such as passing out information to legislators.

Although most college students are not yet members of many interest groups, that situation will probably change quickly once you graduate and start a career.

WHY IN A DEMOCRACY DO THE FEW USUALLY DEFEAT THE MANY?

R. Kenneth Godwin

On June 18, 1998, the bill to curb teen smoking and to settle anti-tobacco law suits in 40 states died in the Senate without coming to a vote. The vote to end the pro-tobacco filibuster in the Senate failed 57-42. (Sixty votes are necessary to end a filibuster.) The Senate declined to pass the anti-tobacco bill even though more than 70 percent of Americans who knew about the bill favored it. Similarly, the National Rifle Association has been able to defeat most measures that would curb the sale of assault weapons despite the fact that the vast majority of American citizens favor such a ban. In July, 1998, President Clinton issued an executive order that raised the price of wheat and other grains to all American consumers when he ordered the government to purchase and store millions of tons grain. Why do the Congress and the President consistently act in ways that relatively few voters support and a great many oppose? Why in a democracy, do the few usually defeat the many?

One answer to the above questions is that the few are organized into interest groups and the many are not. Interests such as the tobacco industry, the NRA, and the American Bar Association have dozens of lobbyists who monitor what politicians do, provide information to assist them in making laws, and provide campaign funds to assist political candidates and parties. During the 1997-98 election cycle, the tobacco industry, the AFL-CIO, and the NRA spent millions of dollars lobbying Congress and the President. They spent millions more on the 1998 elections. Even individual firms spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on lobbying and contributions. Archer-Daniels-Midland, a large agricultural corporation based in Texas, spent over \$1 million dollars on lobbying in the last session of Congress (Phone interview with ADM lobbyist). One health political action committee (PAC) bundled over \$50,000 in contributions to Senator Gramm and Senator Hutchinson during their last campaigns.

Does the unequal access of organized interests undermine democracy in the United States? Journalist Phillip Stern along with ex-Senators William Proxmire and Barry Goldwater wrote the 1992 book, *Still The Best Congress Money Can Buy*, to call attention to the impact of interest groups on decisions made in Congress. They claim that the majority do not determine who wins in politics; money does. Stern, Goldwater, and Proxmire call for major changes in campaign finance, and in the Pro and Con section of this chapter, we will look at some of their arguments. In this section, we will discuss why, even if there were no campaign contributions, organized interests generally would win and the disorganized usually would lose.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE A SENATOR OR THE PRESIDENT?

To understand why the few often defeat the many, pretend for a moment that you are a senator from Texas and that one of the committees on which you serve is the Armed Services Committee. That committee has the primary responsibility for defense spending. One of your jobs is to represent the interests of the people who live in Texas. You also have the duty to ensure that all the people in the United States get the best defense possible for their money.

One of your constituents is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Texas Instruments (TI). TI is the largest private employer in the state and its well-being is important not only to TI's workers and stockholders, but to the entire economy of Texas. The CEO calls your office and asks for an appointment

to see you. Even if TI had not contributed a dollar to your election campaign fund you would still see its CEO because of the importance of the company to your state and because many TI employees vote.

At the meeting, the CEO tells you that it needs to get a price increase on a missile that it builds for the Air Force. To obtain the original defense contract TI submitted a bid to build the missile at a price of \$4 million per missile. Because it submitted the low bid, TI received a contract to manufacture 100 missiles. However, the CEO tells you (truthfully) that his firm cannot make the missile for \$4 million. He asks you to attempt to raise the price of the missile to \$5 million. The cost to the American taxpayers of such an increase would be \$100 million. On the other hand, if TI loses money this will adversely affect your constituents. What do you do? When legislators face a situation like this they typically attempt to help their constituents.

One way to achieve what TI wants is to change the defense appropriations bill in committee or subcommittee “mark-up.” If the committee has 25 members, then you must obtain the votes of twelve other senators. You can do this if you agree to “log-roll.” You will vote for the pet projects of other senators on the committee and they will vote for the TI price increase. The result of this log-rolling is that the American public will pay more for less defense. From your perspective as a politician from Texas, however, this was a good deal. Certainly TI’s management and other employees will look more favorably on your candidacy in the next election. On the other hand, no voter is likely to punish you for your actions.

The reasons for the absence of punishment are two. First, almost no one who is not directly involved with TI will know what you did as few voters have the time to stay abreast of what happens in committee mark-up. Second, even if an interest group such as Common Cause or Concerned Taxpayers of America challenges your actions, you have the perfect defense—you were acting to help the citizens of Texas. In short, this opportunity to “bring home the bacon” is a no-lose situation. The people you helped know it and will reward you. The people you harmed either don’t know what you did (99.99%) or they don’t vote in Texas elections. The incentives for legislators to mark up bills in committee to help the organized few at the expense of the disorganized and unaware many are so strong that the 1994 agriculture bill required 703 pages to list all of the special beneficiaries (Browne, 1995).

All legislators want to obtain benefits for their constituents. And, they often will obtain these benefits even if the costs to the nation as a whole are far greater than the benefits. Even the President is not immune from acting to benefit the few at the expense of the many. In the summer of 1998, President Clinton ordered the government to purchase sufficient grain to push up the price farmers received. This increased the cost of everyone’s food. Why would President Clinton impose costs on so many people while benefiting so few? Because the grain farmers know what the President did and he hoped they would reward the Democratic Party in the 1998 elections. If he had not done it, the President knew that the farmers would punish the Democrats in the next election. The vast majority of consumers either do not know what the President did, or, if they know, his action will not determine how they vote. Once again, we see that it is usually in the politician’s best interest to provide benefits to the organized few while imposing costs on the disorganized many.

WHY DON’T ORGANIZED INTERESTS ALWAYS WIN?

If the above-described incentives are so favorable to organized interests, why don’t interest groups always win? There are four reasons. First, not all organized interests are constituents of a legislator who sits on the pertinent committee or subcommittee. It is much harder to log-roll on the floor of the House or Senate than it is in subcommittee or committee. Rather than needing a handful of votes to

achieve its goal, an interest needs close to 50 votes in the Senate and 218 votes in the House. Interest groups attempt to overcome this problem through campaign contributions to legislators who sit on the committees that are important to them. However, even when legislators receive campaign contributions from interests outside their district, they are far less likely to log-roll for non-constituents than for constituents.

The second reason that organized interests don't always win is that they often face other organized interests. When this occurs both sides can present information on why government should help them rather than their opponent, and both sides can offer campaign assistance and threaten punishment. For example, the sugarcane growers association may request a higher subsidy for cane sugar, arguing that it is impossible for them to make a profit. We can expect that legislators from Florida and Hawaii will support this proposal and logroll for it. However, we would also expect the organizations of sugar beet and corn producers to lobby hard to defeat a higher subsidy for sugarcane. In this situation not only will the winners know they won, the losers will know they lost. A losing interest can punish the legislators who harmed them by supporting their opponent in the next election. Thus, when both sides are organized the political benefit-cost ratio for legislators may not be positive.

A third reason that organized interests lose is that the media discover what is happening and alert the public. If the action is unpopular, this can hurt the reelection bids of the legislators who support the action. For example, the House inserted a provision into the 1997 balanced budget bill that gave a \$50 *billion* dollar tax break to the tobacco industry (Center for Responsive Politics, 1998). When the media discovered this and brought it to the attention of the American people, Congress rescinded the tax break. While legislators from North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky might argue that they were only helping their constituents, there was no way that legislators from Texas plausibly could make this claim.

The final reason that an organized interest might not win is that the legislators do not think the bill is a good idea or it has a low priority. Legislators do care about the national interest and often turn down special interest requests because the legislators think the request is not worthwhile. In addition, some worthwhile projects lose because they have a lower priority than other proposals. Each year legislators receive thousands of requests from special interests. Limits on legislators' time and the national treasury mean that most of these requests will be turned down.

SHOULD THERE BE LIMITS ON CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS?

Numerous individuals and groups have argued that money is too important in politics. The current system of campaign finance unfairly advantages the wealthy and the organized at the expense of the majority of Americans. When the Phillip Morris corporation gives more than \$4 million dollars to candidates and political parties during an election cycle, it expects something in return. Thirty-three political action committees contributed over \$1 million dollars to candidates and parties during the 1995-96 election cycle. One Senator, Gus D'Amato from New York, raised more than \$10 million for his 1998 reelection campaign. Does the current system of campaign financing need to be changed?

In 2001 a bi-partisan bill sponsored by Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Russell Feingold (D-WI) was debated in Congress. Its major provisions included the following: 1. Bans soft money from corporations and unions to national parties and limits individual contributions to national parties to \$20,000 per year. 2. State parties cannot use soft money contributed to influence federal elections. 3. Bans corporations and unions from financing television or radio ads referring to clearly identified

candidates within 60 days of a general election or 30 days of a primary election. 4. Increases the limit on “hard” money contributions by individuals from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and increases the amount of hard money an individual may contribute in aggregate to all federal candidates, parties, and PACs from \$25,000 to \$30,000. 5. Specifies the activities by independent groups or parties that will be considered coordinated expenditures.

IS THE MCCAIN-FEINGOLD BILL GOOD LEGISLATION?

R. Kenneth Godwin

CON
&
PRO

YES!

(Adapted from Avery, 1998, and the Center for Responsive Politics, 1998).

Guiding principles of American democracy always have been political equality and public accountability. The current structure of campaign finance violates both of those principles. When a single interest such as the tobacco industry contributes millions of dollars to political parties and candidates, we can assume that the industry is not acting out of altruism. It expects to get something for its money. The attempt by the House of Representatives to give the tobacco industry a \$50 billion tax break in 1997 and the decision of the Senate not to consider the anti-smoking legislation in 1998 suggests that the tobacco industry is getting something for its efforts. Even if PACs are only "buying access" to decision makers so that they will have an opportunity to be heard, this creates a fundamental political inequality between those who can purchase such access and those who cannot. An interest group might hold a fundraiser for a candidate and "bundle" \$75,000 in contributions. If the candidate wins, when a lobbyist of that interest group wants to see the legislator, the legislator will be available. Ordinary citizens cannot do this. Thus, at the very least, contributions create political inequalities. At the worst, they buy influence.

Large campaign contributions also reduce political accountability. In Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, government should be of, by, and for the people. Lincoln meant the people as a whole, not special interests. James Madison, the father of the Constitution, put it similarly. He wrote that it is essential to liberty that the government should have a common interest with the people. When only a small percentage of the population funds elections the elected officials are more likely to grant access to those people and to be swayed by their arguments. This violates the basic idea that government should be accountable to all the people. By eliminating PACs, soft money, and foreign contributions campaign finance reform would increase equality and accountability.

NO!

(Adapted in part from Crane, 1998)

Americans spend relatively little on political campaigns. The \$260 million in soft money contributions is about \$1 per citizen of the United States. Corporations in the United States spend far more money advertising soap than they contribute to politics. Curbing who can contribute and how much they can give violates a fundamental principle of American democracy, freedom of speech and opinion. It costs money to get information to citizens and an informed citizenry is a key to democratic government and political accountability. Unequal access is a small price to pay for maintaining a free and open political process. Before the reformers curb free speech and information, they should at least prove that current

contributions have created a harm. Studies of the relationship between legislators' votes and campaign contributions by interests generally show that there is no statistically significant relationship between them.

Doing away with PACs and limiting contributions has three other negative effects. First, it increases the likelihood that incumbents will win. Incumbents have name recognition, mailing lists, and an in-place organization to mobilize voters. Challengers need money to buy political advertisements and to build political organizations. Limiting contributions is an incumbent reelection bill. Second, limiting contributions increases the power of the media to control the information that citizens receive. Currently, political campaigns provide an alternative source of information to television, talk radio, and the print media. Finally, curbing contributions makes political activists and organized interests more powerful. They are the only ones who have the time and resources to keep up with the complexity of politics. Limiting information increases rather than decreases the advantages of organized interests.

SOURCES

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Why in a democracy is it likely that the producers of cars will have more influence on automobile legislation than consumers of cars? Which legislators will car producers expect to assist them in obtaining legislation favorable to them? Why?

[illegible][illegible]

EXERCISES-2

[illegible]

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>
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EXERCISE 5-3

WHY DON'T ORGANIZED INTERESTS ALWAYS WIN?

Identify and explain in the space provided below three reasons why organized interests do not win all of the time.

REASON # 1

REASON # 2

REASON # 3

NAME

SEAT No.

SCORE

ACTIVITY

STEP #1:

Choose four members of the House of Representatives, two Democrats and two Republicans whose last name begins with the same letter of the alphabet as your own. (If there are not four representatives with that letter, choose the additional representatives by going backward in the alphabet until you have two legislators from each party. For example, if your last name is Quinn or Quintero and there are not two Democrats and two Republicans whose last name begins with Q, then you would use the letter P as well as Q.)

STEP #2:

Using the Internet, find the three largest political action committee contributors to the legislators you chose. How much did each PAC give? **Be sure to list the source and page number or specific Internet site at which you found your information.**

Possible Internet addresses to use are:

www.nebr.democrats.org

www.opensecrets.org

These addresses have many extended addresses and they give links to other sources.

STEP #3:

Using the information you find, fill in each of the charts below.

DEMOCRAT #1—Name:

	Name of Individual Contributor	Dollar Amount Contributed
Contributor #1		
Contributor #2		
Contributor #3		

DEMOCRAT #2—Name:

	Name of Individual Contributor	Dollar Amount Contributed
Contributor #1		
Contributor #2		
Contributor #3		

REPUBLICAN #1—Name:

	Name of Individual Contributor	Dollar Amount Contributed
Contributor #1		
Contributor #2		
Contributor #3		

REPUBLICAN #2—Name:

	Name of Individual Contributor	Dollar Amount Contributed
Contributor #1		
Contributor #2		
Contributor #3		

FOR THE SAME FOUR LEGISLATORS:

How much did the tobacco industry give to them? Give the dollar amount for each.

Democrat 1 _____
 Democrat 2 _____
 Republican 1 _____
 Republican 2 _____

How much did labor unions give them? Give the dollar amount for each.

Democrat 1 _____
 Democrat 2 _____
 Republican 1 _____
 Republican 2 _____

Sources you used should be listed here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

Pro-reform: www.opensecrets.org

[illegible]

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>
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CHAPTER 6

NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

IN BRIEF, elections are held frequently in the United States. We are called upon to select someone to hold every office from school board member to president. Citizens sometimes feel overwhelmed at all the electoral choices they are asked to make. However, making choices at the polls is a responsibility of being a citizen in a democracy.

A presidential election year is an especially exciting time in the United States. Candidates announce their intentions to run many months before the actual election so they will have time to form their campaign strategies. Early in the election year, caucuses and primaries give us a picture of which candidates are preferred over others. As the weeks go by, some candidates realize that they lack the support they need to continue, so they leave the race. Each party officially nominates its candidates at the summer's political conventions, a uniquely American spectacle. By the end of the conventions, each party's ticket is set. Presidential campaigns officially get underway on Labor Day weekend, with advertising slogans, candidate appearances and speeches, and debates.

All of these efforts culminate on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, the constitutionally established date for presidential elections. Even though we cast our votes then, the victor will not be formally selected that day. The process must be played out through the Electoral College, the method we employ in electing our president and vice president.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE: NEW IMPORTANCE SINCE ELECTION 2000

Gloria C. Cox

"The 'Electoral College,' as it has come to be known, remains an undemocratic anachronism, designed by the framers of the Constitution to act as a filter of popular passions."—Michael Parenti, 1995, Democracy for the Few.

If the popular vote were the means by which we select our president and vice president, Al Gore would now be president of the United States and Joe Lieberman would be vice president. That is not the case, of course. It is George W. Bush who serves as president, and his running mate, Dick Cheney who serves as vice president. The Electoral College, the system by which we select our two top national officials, gave the presidency to Governor Bush after an interval of 36 days during which the outcome in Florida was contested. With a winning margin of hundreds of votes out of approximately six million cast in Florida, that state's electoral votes went to the Republican ticket, giving Bush and Cheney a one-vote margin of victory in the Electoral College. It was the fourth time in our history that the Electoral College has provided victory to the team of candidates who finished second in the popular vote.

Why do we have such a system? Wouldn't it be preferable to count the votes of the citizens on election night and determine who won? Just counting the votes would reflect a great deal of confidence in the ordinary citizens who would be making the decision. In fact, the Framers of the U.S. Constitution had less confidence in the ordinary person than we might want to think. It was their decision to have the president elected indirectly through the filtering process known as the Electoral College. In their mind's eye, the wise men of the nation would get together to select the best qualified, most statesman-like figure they could find to lead us. However, there was only one George Washington and things became very political very fast.

No one should make the mistake of thinking of the Electoral College as an actual college in the modern sense. In this case, the term *college* refers to a group of people. The Electoral College is actually a group of people who are selected to cast votes for the president and vice president. They never meet together as a whole, but the winning electors in each state do get together in their state capital in December in those years when a presidential election is held. The date for state electoral meetings is the same nationwide, since Congress sets it. At those meetings, held in every state and the District of Columbia, electors cast their official ballots which are sent (sealed) to Congress where they are formally opened and counted in January at a joint session of the Senate and House. Only then do we know officially who the incoming president and vice president will be, although about two months passes between election day and the counting of electoral votes in Congress.

Since the vice president of the United States presides over the Senate, there are occasional moments of high drama (or comedy), such as when a vice president announces that he has been elected to serve as the next president of the United States. That happened in 1989 when George Bush proclaimed himself to have won a majority of electoral votes. It can go the other way, of course, just as easily. That happened in 1993 when Dan Quayle announced that Clinton and Gore had won a majority of electoral votes over the Bush-Quayle ticket. Similarly, in 2001, Vice President Al Gore declared that George W. Bush had been elected president of the United States.

But how do we get from hearing announcements that certain individuals are going to run for president and actually having the electoral votes counted? In this essay, we will go through the entire process so that you will have a detailed knowledge of how the Electoral College works. The question and answer format below provides an explanation of the workings of the Electoral College.

HOW MANY ELECTORS ARE THERE AND HOW DO WE KNOW THAT?

There are 538 electors. We arrive at that number because each state has the same number of electors as it has members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. Another way to say the same thing is that every state has the same number of members as its congressional delegation. At the time of the 2000 election, Texas had 30 House members and 2 Senators for a total of 32 electoral votes. Census 2000 resulted in two additional representatives for Texas, so in the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, Texas will have 34 electoral votes, the second highest number of electoral votes after California.

There is a bit of an unanswered question here. Some of you may have added 100 and 435 (membership totals for the Senate and the House) and realized that the number above, 538, contains three unexplained votes. Those three votes are for the District of Columbia and were provided by the Twenty-Third Amendment, added to the Constitution in 1961. Until the 2000 census, the population of Washington indicated that the District voters really should have had four electoral votes, but three votes are better than the zero votes District residents had prior to adoption of the Twenty-Third Amendment.

Note, too, that every state has at least three electoral votes, since every state has two senators and at least one member in the House of Representatives. Among the states with just three electoral votes are Alaska, Delaware, Montana, and North Dakota.

WHO ARE THE ELECTORS AND HOW ARE THEY SELECTED?

Electors are named by each political party, then voted on by the voters in the election, although we usually do not recognize that is what we are doing. Not surprisingly, most electors are longtime party members with a history of party loyalty. Of course, selection by parties is contrary to what the Framers envisioned. What we have now is simply a reflection of the system evolving over time. Students often ask if electors are required by law to vote for the candidate who carries their state. No, but electors pledge that they will vote for their party's candidates, so there are few surprises when the balloting actually occurs. That is not to say that no one violates their pledge. Welch et al. (1996:198) tell of an elector from West Virginia who in 1988 cast her vote for Lloyd Bentsen instead of Michael Dukakis. In fact, the elector later said that "she wished she had voted for Kitty Dukakis." One elector, in 2000, also cast a blank ballot. Also interesting is the fact that the Constitution does not permit current officeholders to be electors, so you won't see a state's governor serving as an elector. It is not uncommon for former officeholders to serve as electors, however.

HAS THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE CHANGED FROM ITS ORIGINAL DESIGN?

Yes, in fact the original idea was that state legislatures would select electors, presumably wise statesmen, who would meet and discuss who among the nation's leaders should be president and vice president. The top vote getter would be president and the second highest vote getter would be vice president. Yes, that did make it possible for the president and vice president to be of two different parties, but at the writing of the Constitution, there were no parties, at least not like today.

By 1800, there were political parties, so those electors loyal to the Democratic-Republicans cast an equal number of votes for Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. That tie vote for Jefferson and Burr meant that the election had to be settled by the House of Representatives. It is certainly easy for us to say today with the 20/20 vision of hindsight that Jefferson was the better choice for president. However, the issue was far less obvious in 1800, because it took the House seven days and 36 ballots to make Jefferson the winner (Janda, Berry and Goldman, 1995:259). After that situation, there was a major revision of the Electoral College through the addition of the Twelfth Amendment to the Constitution in 1804. Since that time, electors have voted separately for president and vice president.

HOW MANY ELECTORS DOES IT TAKE TO WIN THE PRESIDENCY?

It takes a simple majority of Electoral College votes to win, so a candidate can claim victory once the magic number of 270 is reached. It is immediately clear that the strategy of each candidate will be to focus on those states where victory is possible and to make sure that the electoral votes of those states will be at least 270. That means that candidates are likely to look first at states with lots of electoral votes. If you were the candidate, would you rather win California's 54 electoral votes or try to take Alabama (9), Alaska (3), Arkansas (6), Colorado (8), Connecticut (8), Delaware (3), Georgia (13), Hawaii (4), Idaho (4) and Indiana (12)? California is a great prize in the Electoral College, as are Texas, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Still, candidates will not work hard in a large state when they have little chance of carrying it in the election. In 1992, Bill Clinton had such a big lead in California that it seemed pointless to the Bush campaign to sink funds there that would likely not pay off. It is interesting to note that Richard Nixon was the last candidate to promise to campaign in all fifty states; he made that promise in 1960 in a losing effort and learned from his mistakes. When he ran again in 1968, he concentrated on key states and won the presidency.

IT SOUNDS AS IF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE FOCUS IS ON STATES RATHER THAN INDIVIDUALS. IS THAT HOW IT WORKS?

Yes, the Electoral College is a state-by-state system that works together to produce a national winner. In fact, almost all the states have a winner-take-all system. That means that the candidate who wins the most votes, even if that is not a majority, will receive all of that state's electoral votes. That is why big states are major prizes in the Electoral College. Two states, Maine and Nebraska, do not use the winner-take-all method. Instead, electoral votes are divided according to which candidate wins each of their congressional districts, with the balance going to whoever wins the state (Welch et al. 1995:196).

DOESN'T THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTE DISTORT ELECTION RESULTS SOMEWHAT BY EXAGGERATING THE WINNER'S MARGIN OF VICTORY?

Yes, that does happen because of the winner-take-all feature of the Electoral College. Think about a state in which the election is very close and the winner's margin of victory is just a thousand or so votes. That is very close, but it won't look close in the Electoral College because all of the state's electoral votes will go to the person with the most votes. If a person wins several states like that, his or her edge in the Electoral College will be much wider than the popular vote separating them. In fact, this is the situation in most elections. To give two vivid examples, we turn first to the 1960 election pitting Nixon against Kennedy. Kennedy received 49.7% of the vote, but won 56% of the electoral vote (Welch et al., 1996:198). More recently, in 1984 Reagan beat Mondale by winning a whopping 97% of the electoral vote, because he won 49 states. However, those figures represented just 59% of the popular vote, a substantial win, but not the kind of victory represented by the Electoral College totals (Welch et al., 1996:198).

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE FAILS TO PRODUCE A WINNER?

If the Electoral College fails to produce a winner, i.e., a candidate who receives at least 270 electoral votes, the House of Representatives will choose a president from the top three vote getters. Under those circumstances, each state gets one vote. Clearly, this feature was a victory for small states when the Constitution was written, since all states, regardless of population, would be equal whenever it was left up to the House to select the president. One vote for California is certainly a far cry from the 54 electoral votes it gets to cast in the actual Electoral College. No vote may be subdivided, so if a state's delegation is evenly divided, it will end up having no vote at all.

Once the House elects a president, it becomes the Senate's task to select a vice president from the top two vote-getters in the election. Each senator has one vote in the balloting. Whenever a third party candidate enters the presidential race, there is always fear that such a candidate will pull away enough votes to throw the election into the House. Perhaps you remember hearing such fears expressed in 1992 when Ross Perot appeared to be a popular candidate. However, the winner-take-all feature of the Electoral College makes it difficult for serious third-party candidates to get any electoral votes. Remember that unless a candidate gets more votes than either the Democrat or the Republican, that candidate will not receive any electoral votes. That explains how Perot could win 19% of the popular vote in 1992 and come away without a single electoral vote.

HAS THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE EVER GIVEN US A PRESIDENT WHO WAS NOT THE WINNER OF THE POPULAR VOTE?

It has happened four times in our history: 1824, 1876, 1888, and 2000. The election of 1824 provides a dramatic example, since there were four candidates in the race and the eventual winner, John Quincy Adams, had 12% less of the vote than Andrew Jackson (Burns, Peltason, Cronin, and Magleby, 1993:346). The House of Representatives had to resolve the situation, as the Constitution requires. As you perhaps know, Jackson was so infuriated by the injustice he believed he had suffered that he started campaigning almost immediately for the 1828 race, which he won. In recent years, various pundits have blamed Jackson for the long presidential races through which we now suffer, but it seems too much of a burden to place on a man who has been dead so long.

Another probable injustice occurred in 1876 when Samuel Tilden was defeated by Rutherford B. Hayes. Benjamin Harrison became president in 1888, although Grover Cleveland had a slightly higher percentage of the popular vote (Janda, Berry, and Goldman, 1995:298). Still, the framers of the Constitution would probably defend the Electoral College by saying that the system overcomes the "mob mentality" associated with democracy. In other words, the wisdom of the electors outweighs the opinion of ordinary voters.

THIS SYSTEM SEEMS OUT-OF-DATE AND NO LONGER USEFUL. WHY DO WE KEEP IT?

A great many people believe that the citizens of this nation no longer need a filter between their votes and the actual winners of the presidency and vice presidency. They would prefer that on election night the votes just be added up and the winners-declared. We now recognize that may be a harder task than we ever realized. Many people oppose changing the system in any way. In fact, some of the biggest supporters of the Electoral College are officials in big, heavily populated states that benefit from candidate interest. For example, it is common for a presidential or vice presidential candidate to use campaign stops to announce that another dozen aircraft for the military will be built in that state or that a long-sought highway or sewer grant has just come through. Officials in large states believe, correctly, that there are benefits to the kind of clout they have in elections. Officials in small states might be more likely than those in large ones to support a change in the electoral system, except for the fact that they may be disproportionately over-represented in the Electoral College.

It is also true that we are reluctant to change things in our Constitution that work pretty well most of the time. Unlike states, which often amend their constitutions at the merest whim and end up with hundreds of amendments, we stand back from the U.S. Constitution and look at it a long time before making a change that might have unanticipated consequences. The Electoral College has not produced any real disasters, since it has usually put in the White House the person preferred by the people. There is unlikely to be any real move to abolish it.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT

Gloria C. Cox

CON & PRO

INTRODUCTION: One of our great national myths is that this country provided tolerance for all religions and their adherents. Although Europeans most certainly sought refuge in America for the religious persecution they suffered in their homelands, most favored religious freedom for themselves but not for others who disagreed with them. In fact, they did not willingly or quickly embrace religious freedom for all.

Indeed, our national memory of persecuting Jews, Catholics, Baptists, and others for their religious views and practices may have been one of the chief motivations for Madison to write the religious clauses of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. That Amendment forbids Congress from establishing any particular religion and provides as well that there will be freedom to practice one's faith, whatever it may be. The two phrases dealing with religious freedom have often been interpreted by the courts, which makes the history of those issues one of the most interesting to study in all of law.

The general view of the courts has been to adopt the words of Thomas Jefferson and say that a wall of separation exists between church and state. That restriction has the effect of keeping government out of religion, but it does not really speak to the other side of the matter. One of the important developments of recent decades has been the extensive amount of political activity engaged in by churches and various religious groups. This essay considers the question: Should churches and religious groups actively participate in political campaigns and other types of political activity?

YES! Political activism among the faithful is a remarkably effective, time-honored way to achieve organizational goals in the United States. Additionally, churches and various religious groups are no different from other organizations in having goals that they would like to achieve. Just as the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Rifle Association, the Sierra Club, and many other groups have a political agenda, religious groups have agendas that can only be realized by effective political action.

Certainly some people would avoid such comparisons, arguing that the National Council of Churches or the Christian Coalition differs from secular organizations like those mentioned above. However, the reality is that religious groups have goals that are at least as clearly defined as those of other groups. Moreover, the goals of a church, denomination, or religious organization carry with them an added impact for the faithful, the imprimatur of their church, Bible, or priesthood. That sort of Biblical or religious justification enhances the validity of the goals for the members of the group and makes them even more committed to achieving the organization's mission.

Take a modern day example of religious activism for political purposes: the Christian Coalition. According to Steve Kelman (1996:269), the Christian Coalition was formed by Pat Robertson after he lost his bid for the Republican presidential nomination in 1988. Robertson hired Ralph Reed to run the organization, providing him with an extensive mailing list to get started (Greenberg and Page, 1997:320). Many conservative Christians found the Coalition's ideas to their liking and they willingly embraced its agenda which emphasized "family values." Conservative politicians began to use the phraseology of the Christian Coalition, as when Dan Quayle attacked the Murphy Brown show for including a story line about a child being born to an unmarried woman.

The Christian Coalition made clear its support for proposals to preserve the traditional ideas of family and marriage and worked against such ideas as gay and lesbian marriages, feminism, and legal abortion. Additionally, Coalition members strongly supported tough law enforcement, anti-pornography ordinances, and prayer in public schools.

How better to achieve the group's goals than to influence the political process? Christian Coalition members began to assume control of the Republican party apparatus in various states. As of this writing, the Republican party in more than 30 states, including Texas, is dominated by members of the Christian Coalition. It is clear that the Coalition has been remarkably successful at influencing the policies, candidates, and rhetoric of the Republican party. After all, the group's goals may be religious and social in nature, but the way to their achievement is clearly through the political process.

Finally, the effectiveness of using the political process has been demonstrated by African-Americans who centered the civil rights movement in churches where ministers could bring to the assembled citizens the goals and methods of the movement. It is certainly no coincidence that many of the leaders of the movement, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., were ministers.

Many Americans may not be comfortable with so much political activity by religious organizations. They may have the intuitive feeling that if government cannot meddle in religion, then religion ought to stay out of government. They forget the obvious: it is only through the political process that major goals are accomplished.

NO! Americans might do well to look around and be frightened by the intense political activism of religious organizations in recent years. Certainly there is no reason to oppose individual citizens who are members of the Christian faith or another religion and who wish to vote and engage in the usual responsibilities and privileges of citizenship. It would be wrong and irresponsible to suggest that such persons be denied the right to exercise the same rights of citizenship as other persons.

Nor should it be of concern when churches or religious organizations act in the political arena in the same manner as other groups. They may contact office holders and make their views known, host debates to ferret out the views of legislators or others in positions of political responsibility, write letters to convince office holders of their positions on issues, and engage in economic boycotts of businesses for political purposes. These activities, along with many others, are common among groups, whatever their cause. Once again, to deny members of religious groups the means by which they make their positions clear and try to influence officeholders would be to deny access to the democratic process.

What is of concern, however, are the efforts by religious organizations to co-opt or assume control of the structures and offices of political parties, the Congress, state legislatures, or other important mechanisms of the political process. Interest groups have long drawn the line at the exercise of this kind of influence. They make their positions clear, but do not offer their own members as candidates for office or for the positions of influence and power in political parties.

This distinction is what makes the actions of the Christian Coalition different from the civil rights movement more than a generation ago. While churches were important centers of the civil rights movement, providing hospitable meeting places and wonderful leadership, neither churches nor ministers ever sought to control the institutions of government. Instead, they sought coalitions of political leaders, marched to gain public and media attention, and in general built support for their cause. Never did the civil rights movement seek control of Congress, the presidency, state legislatures, or political parties.

Could there be dangers to having religious groups in control of government? We need only reflect on the history of this nation and others, as well as modern day examples, of the excesses that can come about when religious groups control government. The history books, even those of recent decades, are full of stories about the persecution of people who do not and will not accept the majority faith. The Founding Fathers knew what they were doing when they included the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights. Let's keep religion and government separate—for the good of both.

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INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

- Many elected officials use the term “out on the hustings” to refer to campaigning. It is an old and commonly used phrase in our political history.
 - When Gerald Ford campaigned for the presidency in 1976, he was given a tamale wrapped in a corn husk. He didn’t know that he should unwrap it first, so he just tried to bite into it, husk and all. Not successful!
 - Chevy Chase, the comedian, became well-known partly because of his portrayal of President Ford’s tripping and stumbling. Once, when Chase and Ford were on the same stage, Chase pretended to trip, then turned to Ford and said, “Pardon me!” which was a reference to Ford’s pardon of President Nixon. Ford laughed at the time, but in reality Ford’s pardon of Nixon is thought by many to have cost Ford the presidency and contributed to the election of Carter.
 - Speaking of costing someone an election, Clayton Williams hurt his chances of being elected Governor of Texas by making several mistakes; they included his reference to rape as being like rain and his refusal to shake his opponent’s hand when she offered it.
 - Gary Hart’s political hopes went down the drain in the mid-eighties when Hart practically dared reporters to follow him. When they followed him to a yacht, they were rewarded with pictures of Hart with Donna Rice, a beautiful young woman who was not his wife.
 - In 1952, Nixon saved the second spot on the Eisenhower ticket for himself by making his “Checkers speech” in which he denied having benefited from a slush fund. Checkers was a dog that a Nixon supporter had given to the Nixon children.
 - In the 1964 contest between Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater, the Republican used the slogan “In your heart you know he’s right.” The Democrats turned it into “In your heart you know he might.” It was a reference to fears that Goldwater might be willing to use atomic weapons.
-

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Negative campaign ads that focus on the weaknesses of one's opponent instead of one's own strengths as a candidate and potential officeholder are very common. For each situation below, answer as if you are the candidate. Indicate whether you would use the item in your campaigns, then explain your response.

1. You learn that your opponent did not learn to read well until adulthood, so he or she was not a good student. In fact, while in college, your opponent was once placed on academic suspension.

2. You learn that your opponent had an abortion just after she graduated college.

3. Your opponent declared bankruptcy about two years ago, causing his creditors to lose tens of thousands of dollars.

4. Your opponent has not voted in any election for at least ten years.

5. Your opponent is gay, but has not revealed to the public his or her sexual orientation.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

RELIGION AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS A CLASS DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENT

The first part of this activity asks you to discuss within your group various kinds of political activities and the suitability of those activities within religious groups. In the second part of the exercise, you are asked to identify key concepts/ideas that are relevant to this discussion.

PART I

Which of the following political activities do you consider appropriate for churches and other religious groups? Discuss each within your group, with the goal of establishing some guidelines.

- A. _____ The minister discusses societal issues (prayer in schools, abortion, legalization of homosexual marriage, gays in the military, etc.) in the sermon.
- B. _____ In discussing issues, the minister gives parishioners his or her view of which politicians and parties are preferable.
- C. _____ In discussing issues, the minister suggests that God prefers a particular candidate or political party in the upcoming election.
- D. _____ A religious group provides a voter guide to each person at church, indicating which candidates and issue positions are closer to the views of the church.
- E. _____ Funds are collected at church to support the candidate who agrees with church views.
- F. _____ Members of the religious group decide to run for party positions in order to steer the political party in the direction of their views.
- G. _____ Members of the religious group decide to support their members who run for city and county council, the state legislature, the Congress, and other political offices.
- H. _____ Members of the group launch a national boycott of a company that provides insurance benefits for partners of gays and lesbians.
- I. _____ Representatives of a church group approach the local school board with a list of teachers they want reprimanded or dismissed from their jobs for spending too much time discussing evolution in class.
- J. _____ Representatives of a local church group attend the school board meeting to demand that certain books be removed from the school library.

PART II

What do you believe should be the role of religious groups, including churches, in their interactions with the political system? In the space provided, identify the guidelines you arrived at during your group discussion.

- A. _____

- B. _____

- C. _____

NAMESEAT No.SCORE

EXERCISE 6-3

REVIEWING THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Answer the following questions to review your understanding of the Electoral College.

1. Understanding the numbers:

- A. _____ Total number of electors
- B. _____ Number of electors for Washington, D.C.
- C. _____ Number of electors for Texas
- D. _____ Number of electors it takes to win the presidency
- E. _____ Minimum number of electoral votes a state can have

2. Name three states that have the minimum number of electoral votes.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

3. _____ Number of the Amendment that requires a separate vote for president and vice president.

4. Name three states that you would campaign hard in if you were a candidate for president.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

5. Name three states that you would probably not really care if you won or lost—too few electoral votes to matter very much.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

6. Which two states do not use the winner-take-all system for electoral voting?

A. _____

B. _____

7. In the space provided below, explain what happens in the following scenario: Candidate Dallas receives 214 electoral votes, candidate Harris gets 200 electoral votes, and candidate Travis receives 124 votes.

8. When the House of Representatives selects the president, from which candidates do they choose?

9. What happens in the following scenario? In voting for president in the House, the delegation from Texas meets briefly and finds that its 32 members are equally split, with 16 favoring the Democratic candidate and 16 favoring the Republican candidate.

10. When the Senate selects the vice president, from which candidates do they choose?

11. Let's say you are from a small state like Alaska. Would you favor abolishing the Electoral College and relying instead on the popular vote? Why or why not?

12. You are from Texas (or New York or California). You vigorously oppose abolishing the Electoral College. Why?

NAME

SEAT NO.

SCORE

THE ADVANTAGES OF INCUMBENCY

Elected officials or legislators often find that they like their position enough to run for reelection. Although the president is limited to two successful elections to the office, there are no such restrictions on members of Congress who are particularly likely to become career legislators. That the public is not always happy with this fact is evident from recent efforts to limit the number of times a person can be elected to Congress. It is likely that a constitutional amendment will be necessary to accomplish such limits, but there is not yet a great deal of public support for such an amendment.

Incumbents are difficult to defeat once they are in office. They enjoy many clear advantages over *challengers* trying to get elected for the first time. This exercise is designed to give you an opportunity to explore the advantages and disadvantages of incumbency. Think about and answer the following questions. Some additional research may be required.

- Each president below ran for a second term. Indicate whether each won or lost his bid for a second term.

A. _____ Eisenhower

D. _____ Reagan

B. _____ Nixon

E. _____ Bush

C. _____ Carter

F. _____ Clinton

- First, think of incumbency as an advantage and name three factors from a first term in office that could help a *president* get elected to a second term.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

- What are some advantages that an incumbent *member of Congress* enjoys over a challenger?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

4. Now think of incumbency as a disadvantage and think of two occurrences that might prevent a *president* from being elected to a second term:

A. _____

B. _____

5. Below you will find a list of various things that could take place during a presidential or congressional term of office: Write A in the blank if it is a factor that would help the incumbent, B if it is a factor that would hurt the incumbent's reelection.

A. _____ A foreign nation seizes Americans and holds them as hostages. The president says he will not leave the White House until they are freed.

B. _____ The president pardons an unpopular national figure who has been accused of serious crimes against the Constitution.

C. _____ A nation that the United States does not like is hosting the Olympic Games. Prior to the games, that nation invades a neighboring country. The U.S. president decrees that no Americans will attend or compete in those Olympic Games.

D. _____ A year before the election, the president takes steps to lower interest rates and decrease unemployment over several months.

E. _____ Congress and the presidency are controlled by different political parties. Before the election, the president accuses Congress of doing nothing and refusing to act on bills that are important to the nation.

F. _____ A member of Congress sends mailings to his constituents every six months. In these mailings, each constituent is asked for an opinion on various issues.

G. _____ There is a tremendous scandal involving the writing of bad checks by congressional members. John Doe and Jane Roe are members of Congress who are not involved at all in the scandal.

H. _____ Congressman Doe goes home to the district every weekend and speaks to lots of groups, including the Rotary, the PTA, and various other civic organizations.

I. _____ Texas is a shaky state in the upcoming presidential election. The president visits the Metroplex and announces that 10 more F-14s will be built at the facility in the state.

NAME

SEAT NO.

SCORE

POLITICAL ADVERTISING

1. What is the most memorable campaign ad you have ever seen? (If you can't think of one, you may want to view the video entitled "*The Thirty Second President*" by Bill Moyers, which contains many campaign ads, although not from the most recent campaigns.)

a. Describe your most memorable ad.

b. On behalf of whose candidacy was the ad produced?

2. In the space below write a brief essay explaining why the ad was effective, what you liked about it, and the nature of its appeal to you.

NAME	SEAT NO.	SCORE

PART III

PUBLIC POLICY

CHAPTER 7

PUBLIC POLICY

IN BRIEF, public policy is what governments do or don't do in response to issues. Have you ever wondered why government policy makers act on some matters and seem to ignore others? Have you ever wondered why policy makers seem to be completely unaware of or unconcerned about something that seems to you to be of great importance? The fact is that if we are to move a new subject into the public arena for discussion and action, something must happen to get that issue on the institutional agenda, that list of subjects considered to be in need of the attention of policy makers. Merely being on the systemic agenda does not necessarily make it of interest to government.

What forces move an issue out of the realm of private concern and make it a public issue? In general, something must happen to let policy makers know that the issue is important to the nation generally and/or to particular groups of people. A catastrophe may bring an issue to the forefront, as when an airplane crash highlights safety issues about flying or an assassination attempt against the president's life focuses attention on gun control. An issue may get to the institutional agenda after months or years of lobbying by concerned groups, as evidenced by the campaign waged by Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Congress responded with legislation that prodded most states into raising their drinking age to twenty-one. Occasionally even a widely-read book can influence persons in positions of power and influence to pay attention to an issue. Examples of such important books include Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring* (about DDT); Michael Harrington's *The Other America* (about poverty in the United States); and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (about women's rights).

WHAT IS PUBLIC POLICY?

R. Kenneth Godwin

In war you can only be killed once, but in politics many times.—Winston Churchill

Textbooks typically define public policies “as general plans of action adopted by a government to solve a social problem, counter a threat, or pursue an objective” (Janda et al., 1997). Unfortunately, such a definition leads us to miss much of what government does. Look at the following government decisions:

1. Passing amendments to the Clean Air Act
2. Reducing welfare benefits
3. Subsidizing the tuition and fees of Texas residents who attend Texas state colleges and universities
4. Deciding not to enforce civil rights legislation
5. Choosing not to adopt national health care legislation
6. Deciding not to pass the Equal Rights Amendment
7. Amending the Wright Amendment that restricts flights out of Dallas Love Field.
8. Raising the price the government pays one corporation for a particular missile
9. Banning the import of large motorcycles for five years.

Which of these is a policy? The first three activities all meet the definition of a general plan of action officially adopted by government to solve a problem or to pursue an objective. What about numbers four, five, and six? These are government decisions not to do something. When school districts decided not to require their schools to integrate after the Supreme Court’s ruling in *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka*, would you say the school districts had a policy of segregation? When an insufficient number of states ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, was it the policy of the government to allow certain forms of discrimination against women? What about numbers seven, eight, and nine, making decisions that affect only one person or corporation? Does this constitute “a general plan of action?”

NONDECISIONS: THE CHOICE TO SUPPORT THE STATUS QUO

One of the most important decisions a government can make is to decide not to take action. For example, despite the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, for almost 100 years the federal government allowed states to systematically discriminate both *de facto* and *de jure* against African Americans and other minorities. We would argue that this was a policy. When the Texas Public Utility Commission decides not to allow an increase in electricity rates, this is a policy that benefits consumers. Similarly, when a local zoning board decides not to grant a request to change the zoning of an area from agricultural to commercial, this is a policy to maintain the existing land-use plan.

Decisions by elected officials not to change the status quo are far more prevalent than decisions to make changes. In each session of Congress more than two thousand legislative measures are introduced in the House of Representatives. Usually fewer than one-fourth of these proposals become law.

In many respects, the ultimate political power in a democracy is the ability to prevent an issue from coming to a majority vote. You already know that a major power of committee and subcommittee chairpersons in legislatures is the power to decide on which bills there will be hearings. If a bill cannot get a hearing, it generally does not make it to the floor of the House or the Senate. In the absence of a floor vote, a bill cannot become a law. In a number of states voters can overcome the problem of nondecisions by their state governments through the process of *initiative* and *referendum*. Citizens can initiate a new law (or repeal an existing one) if a certain percentage of the registered voters in the state sign a petition to hold a referendum (a state-wide vote) on a proposed law. If the measure receives a majority of votes, then it becomes law. Recently, for example, after the state's elected officials did not curtail the length of time public schools could teach a student in a language other than English, the citizens of California used initiative and referendum to do so.

COLLECTIVE AND PRIVATE GOODS

Actions seven, eight, and nine in the above list are examples of publicly supplied private goods. They are examples of the government giving large benefits to a one or two individuals, organizations or corporations. These actions occur thousands of times each year and have substantial effects on the American economy and the national debt. Despite their ubiquitous nature, most American government textbooks avoid discussing these activities and the textbook's definition of "public policy" excludes them. This omission leads to a serious misunderstanding of what governments generally do.

To correct this error political science could follow economics and distinguish between policies that provide collective (or public) goods and policies that provide private goods. Publicly supplied *collective goods* occur when policies create benefits that affect large numbers of people and firms. Technically, a collective good is one that bestows collective benefits on members of a set of individuals or organizations that share specific characteristics. If a benefit is made available to anyone or any organization with the specified attributes, then all who have those attributes can receive the benefit (Case and Fair, 1992). For example, most students reading this page receive a collective good from the government of Texas. If you meet the state's residency requirements and attend a public university in Texas, the state pays approximately 75% of the costs of providing you with a college education. The cleaner air that results from air pollution regulations also is a collective good. All who live in the United States breathe cleaner air because of air pollution regulations. Similarly, welfare, Social Security, and veteran benefits are collective goods. Anyone who meets the guidelines that their state government uses to determine eligibility can receive food stamps, free medical attention, and a monthly stipend. All who reach a certain age and contributed to the Social Security Trust Fund can receive Social Security benefits.

The other type of good that government supplies is a private good. A publicly supplied *private good* is a benefit that the government grants to a some people or organizations but not to all people or organizations with the same attributes. Items seven through nine in the list above are private goods. The Wright Amendment does not apply to all Texas airports, just Love Field. This action benefits DFW and harms Love Field. Similarly, when Congress granted the price increase to Texas Instruments for its missile, the government did not raise the price of missiles produced by other companies. When the Reagan administration gave protection to Harley Davidson, it did not give protection to all manufacturers who were being threatened by foreign competition.

Why does the government grant private goods? Often because the individuals or firms that want the good are not opposed by other organized interests. In fact, frequently those whom the action harms never know that it occurred. This means that the politicians who help provide the good can expect to receive future electoral support from the winners and they do not expect to be punished by the losers. For example, a decision to increase the price of a missile produced by Texas Instruments (TI) occurred when a lobbyist from TI approached Senator John Tower. Tower, a senator from Texas, was the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. That committee played a major role in deciding how large the defense budget would be and how it would be spent. TI argued that it was losing money producing the missile and that if it had to stop production this would create unemployment in Texas and damage the nation's defense. The Department of Defense did not object to the increase so long as it received a budget increase to cover the cost. Other companies that produced missiles did not object as the action set a precedent for them to make similar appeals at a later date. Few members of the Armed Services Committee objected because Senator Tower accepted other increases in the budget that benefited their constituents. Finally, the obvious losers in this decision, the American taxpayers, did not know about it. The action that increased the price occurred during subcommittee "mark-up." Neither the subcommittee nor the full Senate ever voted on the specific price increase as it was one of many changes in the Department of Defense's budget.

The bureaucracy also grants private goods. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a private good every time it grants a waiver to a firm so that the firm can continue discharging emissions higher than the law allows. The EPA grants such waivers every week. Perhaps the most important private goods that regulatory agencies give occur when the agency decides not to enforce a particular regulation. For example, a prominent steel company in the southeastern United States engaged in serious polluting of a major river for more than a decade. EPA knew that the pollution was occurring, but decided to spend its enforcement resources elsewhere. When the Treasury Department's anti-trust division decides not to attempt to halt a merger between two large companies even though it believes the merger violates anti-trust regulations, this saves the companies hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees.

State and local governments also provide numerous private goods. Perhaps the most common are changes in zoning. If a developer buys land currently zoned for agricultural use and the city or county then changes the zoning to commercial or residential use, the government has granted that developer a huge profit. Perhaps the most visible and well-known examples of private goods bestowed by local governments are the millions of dollars local governments spend to build arenas for privately owned sports teams.

Conservative economist Gordon Tullock maintains that private goods supplied by the government often constitute welfare for the rich. He argues that the total value of these private goods far exceeds the cost of welfare for the poor. Equally important, the granting of these private goods makes the economy less efficient and costs the American taxpayer billions of dollars (Tullock, 1997). Perhaps the most notorious recent example of legislators providing private goods was the effort of the "Keating Five." These were five Senators who prevented savings and loan regulators from auditing Lincoln Savings and Loan, a savings bank owned by Charles Keating. When Lincoln Savings and Loan finally collapsed because of Keating's criminal activities and bad banking practices, it cost the U.S. taxpayers *\$2 billion*.

Almost all government decisions that the media report and political scientists analyze are decisions about collective goods. The media rarely cover decisions about the private goods government

supplies and political scientists generally do not study them. Why is this? There are three reasons. First, decisions that appear to affect more people seem more important. Why should the media report a decision that affects only one corporation when they can cover such decisions as raising the minimum wage that affect thousands of businesses? Second, decisions about collective goods generally have higher levels of conflict. This conflict increases the public's interest in the legislation. Changing abortion laws or revising rules concerning pesticides are much more likely to attract public interest than granting a single airline a waiver to exceed noise regulations. Third, decisions about collective goods tend to be easier to observe. These decisions typically require either roll-call votes in Congress or, if a regulatory agency is providing the good, it holds public hearings. In contrast, when a decision affects only one or two individuals or companies, it is hard to know when the decision occurred or who made it. If the legislature makes the decision it often does so in subcommittee without a roll-call vote. If a regulatory agency makes the decision, it frequently announces it to no one other than the firm who requested it.

Why should we worry about nondecisions and private goods? Because they tell us a lot about the quality of our democracy, and they constitute important ways in which government officials affect our lives and our pocketbooks. One of the most difficult tasks that people face when dealing with the government is getting on the political agenda, getting the chance to be heard. If nondecisions systematically discriminate against the less powerful in our society, and they do, this decreases the level of democracy. Similarly, most private goods go to well-organized and powerful interests. If we fail to recognize this, we miss much of what government does and why it does it.

ENTITLEMENT POLICIES AND THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

As we indicated above, when individuals receive a collective good this occurs because the individuals have specific characteristics. Social Security, Medicare, and veterans benefits are examples of these. We call such policies *entitlement* policies because the government has determined that anyone with a specific set of characteristics is entitled to them. These programs absorb an exceptionally high percentage of domestic policy expenditures; and the vast majority of these expenditures go to the elderly. Currently veterans benefits, Social Security, and publicly-provided medical care for the elderly take up almost 25 percent of the total federal budget. When the baby boom generation reaches retirement age, this cost will reach more than a third of total government expenditures. By the year 2010, the amount paid to the elderly will reach more than a third of total government expenditures and the payment of these "entitlements" will require either huge taxes on those under 65 or a reemergence of the huge deficits that occurred in the 1980s.

A serious problem with the trend of ever-increasing expenditures on the elderly is that these policies typically redistribute wealth from the less wealthy young to the more wealthy elderly. The General Accounting Office estimates that in 1998 elderly people with family incomes over \$55,000 per year received nearly \$75 billion in payments from federal entitlement programs. The family incomes of people over 65 are larger than any other age group in the population except for those persons aged 50 to 65. Therefore, the entitlement programs that originally were meant to keep the elderly out of poverty have become ways to transfer wealth from the less-wealthy to the more-wealthy. Perhaps more important, these programs are redistributing wealth from children to the elderly. If total expenditures for all child-oriented programs are added together—Head Start, Food Stamps, child nutrition, child health, and all federal aid to education—these expenditures equal only one-sixth of the federal expenditure on the elderly (Children's Defense Fund, 1984).

A second huge problem that the United States faces is the increased feminization of poverty and the high rates of children who live in poverty. At present, more than 50 percent of all children under 19 who live in a female-headed, single-parent family live in poverty. Only 13 percent of other children live in poverty. More than 40 percent of all households headed by women have incomes below the poverty level. Two substantial social changes have created these problems. First, increased numbers of divorced and separated couples have created large numbers of female-headed households. The impact of this has been a huge decrease in the welfare of the children of those households. Family income after a divorce is more than \$12,000 per year less than it was before the divorce. Obviously, part of this decline is due to the necessity of two residences for the parents. A larger portion of the problem comes from the failure of the majority of fathers to pay the child-support payments that the court has ruled that they owe their children. The second social change that has led to the feminization of poverty has been the huge increase in the percentage of children born to single mothers. By 1993, over 60 percent of African-American children were born to unmarried or separated women and the percentage of children born to unmarried or separated women in the white population exceeded 20 percent. The impact of these social problems is compounded by the absence of affordable child care for working mothers.

WHO ARE THE WINNERS AND LOSERS IN PUBLIC POLICY?

The frequency with which government provides private goods to individuals and corporations might lead you to ask, "Why in a democratic political system where the majority are supposed to win do single individuals or corporations get the benefits while the majority (taxpayers) pay the costs?" One reason is that the individuals and corporations who receive the benefits are politically informed and politically active. The winning individuals and corporations are able to provide information to public officials to justify the benefits they receive. In addition, those who benefit typically reward public officials with campaign contributions or other support. Because they are politically unaware and inactive, they cannot punish the policy makers for providing private goods.

Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram (1997) provide another explanation of why some people are more likely to win and others more likely to lose in politics. Schneider and Ingram argue that how the public perceives various groups in the population is an important factor in determining whether they will win in politics. They divide groups in two ways: whether the public views them positively or negatively and whether policy makers see them as politically strong or weak. This results in four groups: the Advantaged, Contenders, Dependents, and Deviants. Advantaged interests are both politically powerful and viewed by the public in a positive light. Groups that are powerful but viewed negatively, such as polluting industries and unions, are Contenders. Policy makers are usually pleased to promote programs that aid the elderly or benefit business. And, because of the political clout of Contenders, policy makers rarely will pass policies that substantially harm them.

Some groups are not politically powerful. They are not well organized and they are not politically active. For this reason, they are unlikely to receive substantial benefits from government. Because the public views interests in the Dependent category positively, it is unlikely that policy makers will pass measures that overtly harm them. However, policy makers will be eager to pass measures that harm interests in the Deviant category.

How does the public perception of groups and their political power translate into policy outcomes? Think back to the efforts to balance the 1996 budget by President Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress. There were many programs that could have been cut. Simply eliminating private benefits to wealthy individuals and firms would have balanced the budget. Another option, one that

would have helped the long-term problem of entitlements for the elderly, would have been to reduce Social Security payments by taxing Medicare benefits of families with incomes over \$55,000. Congress and the president might have cut farm subsidies to individual farmers and farm corporations that made over \$1 million in profits. Policy makers took none of these actions as all would have harmed groups that fall in the Advantaged category. What programs did policy makers cut? AFDC payments for single parents and entitlement benefits to legal and illegal aliens. Policy makers aimed cuts at groups that were politically weak. To avoid the appearance of cutting programs for groups viewed positively by the public, policy makers talked as if these changes affected only Deviants, unwed mothers and illegal aliens, rather than affecting both Dependents and Deviants. The cuts harmed children as well as mothers and legal as well as illegal aliens.

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SHOULD TEXAS HAVE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM?

CON

In some states, voters can overcome the problem of nondecisions by their state governments through a process of initiative and referendum. Citizens can *initiate* a new law (or repeal an existing one) if a certain percentage of the registered voters in the state sign a petition to hold a *referendum* (a statewide vote) on a proposed law. If the measure receives a majority of votes, then it becomes law. Recently, for example, after the state's elected officials did not curtail the length of time public schools could teach a student in a language other than English, the citizens of California used initiative and referendum to do so. In Texas, we have use of the referendum only to approve or disapprove proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution and we have no opportunity to use the initiative. Should Texas amend its constitution so that its citizens have the opportunity to use both the initiative and referendum?

&

YES!

Proponents of initiative and referendum argue that citizens should have the right to make policy directly. Texans should have the same opportunity as Californians to limit property taxes and to reduce the time that non-English speaking students can take classes in their native language. Texans should have the chance to limit the number of terms that a state legislator can serve. If nondecisions are such an important part of public policy, then allow the people to overcome the reluctance of public officials to consider such controversial issues as gun control and abortion rights. If powerful interest groups block the will of the majority by using intensive lobbying and campaign contributions, give the people the ability to overcome those organized interests. Allowing the people to make policy increases citizen interest and gives people a greater incentive to register and vote. In a democracy the people should experience actual *self*-government.

PRO

NO!

Opponents of initiative and referendum believe that the arguments of Madison in *Federalist #10* are still valid. Direct democracy allows the majority to tyrannize the minority. Nativism, sexism, racism, homophobia, and other prejudices have, at times, been all too common in the majority of citizens. Numerous studies show that citizens are far less likely than their elected representatives to be tolerant of dissent and to support democratic norms. Representative democracy was a great innovation by the Founders of our nation. Madison and the other Framers of the Constitution were correct in their expectation that the people would elect representatives whose judgment would be superior to that of the citizens at large. In fact, a major advantage of *representative* government is that representatives can defy public opinion when a majority faction forms that would infringe upon the

rights of the minority (Forde, 1999). If the majority continues to want a policy after their elected representatives have refused to make it, then the majority can elect representatives who pledge to carry out their desire. At least the majority will have had time to think through their decision and not be swayed by intemperate language or prejudice.

Another reason that the Founders preferred representative to direct democracy was that representatives normally would have more time and information on which to base their decisions. Opponents of initiative and referendum maintain that too frequently initiatives are phrased so that they are either unclear and/or provocative and misleading. The way a proposition is worded rather than its reasonableness often determines the outcome. Several times voters have passed, in the same election, initiatives that contradicted each other because the wording of the initiatives rather than their rationale determined how citizens voted.

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

SCORE

CATEGORIZING PUBLIC POLICIES

Categorize each policy listed below by writing *Collective* or *Private* in the blank provided. If the decision was a nondecision, place an 'N' beside either *Collective* or *Private*. For example, if the policy was the decision of the government not to attempt to prevent a merger between MCI and AT & T, then you would put *Private*, N in the blank.

1. _____ Providing money for national defense
2. _____ Giving the Texas Motor Speedway relief from all property taxes for ten years
3. _____ Rejecting an amendment to the Constitution that would make it a federal crime to desecrate the flag of the United States
4. _____ Establishing a national health insurance program
5. _____ Raising the price that government will pay a company in Maryland for the military tents it produces
6. _____ Establishing a new national park
7. _____ Eliminating subsidies for dairy farmers
8. _____ The Supreme Court choosing not to hear an abortion case challenging the right to abortion during the first six months of pregnancy
9. _____ EPA deciding not to prosecute a chemical plant that violated worker safety regulations
10. _____ Eliminating the requirement that students who graduate from public universities take courses on Texas government
11. _____ The practice of giving UNT faculty a warning when speeding on Eagle Street while giving UNT students a ticket
12. _____ Providing the Texas agribusiness Archer-Daniels-Midland a subsidy to develop alternative energy sources from corn products

13. _____ Eliminating funding for research to develop a vaccine for HIV
14. _____ Providing state-funded child care programs for state employees
15. _____ Giving Southwest Airlines a waiver to use an aircraft engine that emits more noise than federal regulations allow

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

UNDERSTANDING IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Each of the following questions can be answered with information available in the chapter essay and your textbook. Provide a complete answer to each.

- 1. A highway patrol officer dies while saving the life of the governor. The legislature responds by passing a bill that gives the officer’s children a full scholarship to any public institution. Is this a collective or a private good? Why?

- 2. When Senator John Tower of Texas inserted the price increase for the Texas Instruments missile, what were the political benefits and costs of that action for Senator Tower?

- 3. If your last name begins with a letter from A to E, explain why it is difficult for the media to report on nondecisions. If your last name begins with the letter from F to Z, explain why it is difficult for the media to report on the provision of private goods.

NAME	SEAT No.	SCORE

8 CHAPTER

SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

IN BRIEF, the issue of poverty is a sensitive and difficult one for Americans. We are torn by two deeply held but conflicting beliefs. On the one hand, we take great pride in being the world's richest nation. Americans enjoy conveniences and comforts unfathomed in most of the world. When athletes at the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996 were asked the most amazing observation they had made about the United States, many remarked on the huge amounts of food we have—and waste.

Yet on the other hand, we also hold a very strong belief that work is the key to success, and indeed, it is the key to our national greatness. When there is a problem, we apply “Yankee ingenuity” as the fix. How else but by hard work could we have been first to the Moon at the same time that we were refining an inoculation to prevent polio and developing cures for other diseases? We hold in high regard those who work hard. If they achieve something important, that is great, but at the minimum they must provide for their families.

Our belief in American success and its relationship to work makes it hard for us to accept the existence of entrenched poverty affecting tens of millions of people. We seem to be much more comfortable blaming their lack of success on their personal failings than on the failure of our economy or practices as a nation. Certainly when we discuss programs to help the poor, these important values are at work in steering our policy makers toward proposals and programs.

TAKING CARE OF THOSE WHO CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES

Gloria C. Cox

"It's time, it's time to build a mighty movement for children in the richest and most powerful nation on earth."

Marian Wright Edelman, Founder of the Children's Defense Fund, quoted in Fleming, p.1

Self-sufficiency has deep roots in American culture, which helps to account for the fact that the United States was late among developed nations in enacting national legislation to assist the needy. There was great faith in the idea of hard work as the key to taking care of oneself and one's family, and, with a little luck, even getting ahead. Those who were left behind were seen as lacking the ambition and ability to succeed. In fact, *Social Darwinism* was a popular idea. It held that even in the human community there is a process of natural selection at work, allowing some to become wealthy while others eke out a meager existence.

As you learned in the previous chapter, an issue may reach the public agenda when there is a crisis of some kind. The crisis that brought social welfare issues to the attention of national policy makers was the Great Depression. For the first time, many Americans realized that working hard was not necessarily sufficient when the economy took a catastrophic plunge of the sort the Depression represented. Few legislative acts have been as significant as the Social Security Act of 1935, a law that created a program of old age insurance as well as public assistance for certain categories of the needy, and the unemployment insurance program. These programs were far reaching and of great importance. The name alone signifies a great change in our thinking about economic well-being.

By the 1960s, another generation of Americans was ready to take a look at the poverty that was still so evident in the United States. President Lyndon Johnson was reportedly very much affected by Michael Harrington's 1963 book about poverty, *The Other America*. The president had had a taste of poverty while growing up in his native Texas, and showed genuine concern for those trapped by it. As a result, he proposed a series of programs known collectively as the War on Poverty. The best known and most successful of Johnson's initiatives was Head Start, a program designed to help children overcome the constraints of poverty and compete successfully when they enter school.

POVERTY IN THE UNITED STATES

The Office of Management and Budget has issued a directive by which the Census Bureau determines annually a poverty threshold for the nation. For the year 2000, the poverty threshold for one person under age sixty-five was approximately \$9,000 in annual income. For a family of four, the poverty threshold was \$17,761 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). In 1999, the Clinton Administration took considerable pride in data from the Census Bureau that showed poverty to be at a twenty-year low. In actual numbers, that meant that 32.3 million Americans were living in poverty, compared to 34.5 million a year earlier.

WHO ARE THE POOR IN THE UNITED STATES?

In 1999, the poverty rate dropped to its lowest rate ever for all groups except whites. Declines in the poverty rate were recorded for African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans. In addition, there were declines in the percentage of those listed as poor in various metropolitan areas, in several states, and the District of Columbia (Census Bureau, 2001).

The poor are more likely to come from certain specific groups than others. First, many of those in poverty are children. According to the Children's Defense Fund, more than 12 million children, one in six children in the United States, live in poverty. Not surprisingly, children from one-parent households are more likely to be poor than those who live in two-parent homes (Pleming, April 19, 2001). Still, it is notable that the percentage of children in poverty dropped slightly from 1998 to 1999, which meant that the 1999 child poverty rate was the lowest in the United States in decades (Census Bureau, 2001). Nonetheless, the child poverty rate in the United States is much higher than it is in other industrialized nations. Sweden has the lowest rate of child poverty at just 2.4%.

It is also true that poverty rates are higher for minority groups than for whites. In 1999, the poverty rate for Blacks was 23.6% and the poverty rate for Hispanics was 22.8%, compared to a poverty rate of 7.7% for whites.

There are also many working poor, those persons who work but at rates of compensation that are too low to lift them out of poverty. The Urban Institute notes that while these persons are not literally poor according to the government's official definition of poverty, "they are near enough to the economic edge that an illness, a job layoff, or even a major car repair can have severe consequences for their well-being" (Acs, Phillips, and McKenzie, 2000). The Urban Institute estimates that about one in six Americans falls into the working poor category, or about one-third of all non-elderly persons. They tend to be young people with children and also tend to be less well educated than those in higher income categories. The Urban Institute researchers suggest that it will be difficult to lift the working poor out of poverty.

HUNGER AS A MEASURE OF POVERTY

Hunger, especially among children, is one of the clearest indicators of poverty. The Department of Agriculture estimated that in 1998 more than ten million families were food insecure, meaning there was insufficient food in the home or available to members of the household to meet their basic needs. The Department estimated that 6.1 million adults and 3.2 million children lived in households suffering from hunger (Food Research and Action Center [FRAC], 2001). The number at risk of hunger is substantially higher and was estimated at 13.6 million children under 12 years of age, or about 29 percent of all children under 12 years of age experiencing hunger or near hunger at sometime during the year. According to FRAC, Second Harvest National Food Bank Network served 27.5 million people in 1998, of whom about 38 percent were 17 or younger (FRAC, 2001).

REASONS FOR POVERTY

Reasons for the prevalence of poverty vary according to who you ask. We pride ourselves on being a wealthy nation, but then find that a substantial number of people are poor. We do not all agree, however, as to the causes of poverty.

Conservative Viewpoints: Conservatives acknowledge that some people cannot work—persons who are sick and/or disabled, for example—and offer that numerous programs are available to assist the truly needy. Those who are poor through no fault of their own qualify for various types of assistance, which is as it should be. By and large, though, conservatives believe that the vast majority of those who are in poverty are in that condition largely because of their own choices and decisions. The public school system is available to everyone, but some students drop out, making themselves virtually unemployable in a technologically sophisticated society. There are among the poor those who are addicted, those who are lacking industriousness and ambition, and those who develop a criminal mentality. All could have made different choices. Also among the poor are young people who became parents too soon, before they finished their

education and job training. Unwed teenage mothers and the young men who are unwilling and unable to assume responsibility for their offspring are primary examples offered by conservatives of those whose circumstances are of their own making. Even so, for those who realize their mistakes, there are job training programs, rehabilitation programs, and other ways to redeem themselves in society.

Liberal Viewpoints: Liberals blame the individual less and society more for the problem of poverty. Certainly, some people are poor because of their own personal behavior, including dropping out of school, getting a criminal record, and developing addictions. Still, liberals would ask society to accept responsibility for the poor schools that many students must endure, as well as the desperate need of some young people to drop out of school to support their families. Liberals would argue that in some communities there is very little hope of a better future and that poverty is all some people know. When it comes to government programs, liberals suggest that we condemn the poor for the aid they get, but don't bat an eye at the many programs that help the middle and upper classes, such as mortgage deductions on tax returns, Social Security for the well-off, and other benefits to the non-poor. With that in mind, they suggest that government is the only agent with sufficient resources to be of real assistance to the poor.

WHAT SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS FORM THE SAFETY NET TODAY?

Expenditures for various social welfare programs are substantial. According to Greenberg and Page (1999: 603), "In 1997, outlays for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and means-tested entitlement programs came to \$762 billion, or 47% of the federal budget." There are really two types of programs that form the social welfare structure in the United States.

Social Insurance Programs: Social Insurance programs are those into which we pay in order to establish our eligibility for future benefits. The Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Program, commonly referred to as Social Security, is the foundation of the social insurance program in the United States. The key component was the retirement program established in 1935. The following year, coverage was added for women and children and in 1956, coverage was provided for disabled persons (Greenberg and Page, 1999: 604). Most workers are required to pay into Social Security, which establishes their eligibility for benefits if and when they become eligible. President Bush has proposed allowing workers to keep a portion of what they currently pay into Social Security so that they might invest the money on their own.

In 1965, Medicare was established as a health insurance program for the elderly. The high cost of Medicare has become a matter of concern to the federal government, since it cost \$181 billion, 11 percent of the federal budget, in 1997 (Greenberg and Page, 1999: 606). The high costs associated with Medicare are hardly surprising, given the increasing age of the U.S. population, the heavy use of expensive technology in medical care, and the power of the health care industry in the United States. Nonetheless, there is a major effort at present to broaden the coverage of Medicare by adding a prescription drug component for program beneficiaries.

The final component of our social insurance coverage is unemployment insurance that is paid for by a tax on employers. Workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own (such as company cutbacks or a move of the factory to another location) may qualify for a period of benefits from unemployment insurance.

Public Assistance Programs: These programs assist the eligible poor even though no coverage has been "bought" with contributions. Public assistance programs are viewed as welfare. It comes as no surprise that recipients tend to be stigmatized in the public eye if they are healthy and able-bodied. Food Stamps is one such program as well as other food supplement programs such as the Women, Infants, and Children

Program. However, the most famous (and reviled) of public assistance programs was AFDC, Aid to Families with Dependent Children. AFDC was established in the 1930s to help families that had no breadwinner, as men were then seen. In the later years of the program, its recipients were mainly never-wed or divorced mothers. Beneficiaries were negatively stereotyped and portrayed as promiscuous and/or dependent on government assistance (O'Connor and Sabato, 2001: 631-2). AFDC was seen as harmful to recipients in that it encouraged women not to marry so they could remain eligible for benefits. Moreover, many feared that AFDC bred a culture of dependence that was detrimental to the long-term well-being of the women and children who received it.

By the late 1980s, there was a great deal of interest in Congress in reform of AFDC, which resulted in new legislation signed by President Clinton in 1996. The law abolished AFDC and replaced it with a new program that sets a lifetime limit of five years for welfare eligibility. In fact, the maximum coverage for a single episode of poverty is two years. According to O'Connor and Sabato (634), other key provisions include limits on Food Stamp eligibility and a requirement that unmarried mothers under age eighteen must stay in school and live with an adult to remain eligible for benefits.

Much research is underway to assess the effectiveness of these changes in public assistance. One thing that seems clear is that many people have left or been taken off the welfare rolls since these changes were made. What is less clear is whether they have found work that allows them to take care of their families or whether they are just not receiving public benefits and are more destitute than ever.

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NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE: GOOD IDEA OR BIG MISTAKE?

Gloria C. Cox

CON
&
PRO

YES, national insurance is a good idea! Americans are well aware that many other highly developed nations offer their citizens a more comprehensive approach to medical care than ours. Germany instituted national health insurance more than a century ago and virtually all other developed nations of Western Europe had national health insurance by 1950 (Greenberg and Page, 1999: 612). Health care policy in the United States has clearly not kept pace with the level of protection offered in other nations. With the high costs of health care and the large number of Americans without health insurance, it is clear that we have reached the point where it is necessary for the federal government to step in to offer citizens a program of national health insurance paid for by contributions from employers, employees, and tax revenues.

The idea of national health insurance is far from new. As O'Connor and Sabato (2001: 613-4) point out, it was President Harry Truman who first proposed such a system in the late 1940s. The idea has surfaced again from time to time, most recently in the Clinton administration when Mrs. Clinton headed a task force to make recommendations about health insurance. Each time, the health care industry has stepped in to oppose the idea, often with highly professional and well-funded campaigns. The closest we have come to national health insurance was in the 1960s when Medicaid and Medicare were approved. *Medicaid* provides health care for some low income persons, while *Medicare* is available to all persons eligible to receive Social Security. The high costs of these two programs no doubt help to create opposition against expansion of coverage to other groups or to the population as a whole.

First, the high costs of health care now make it necessary to develop a national health insurance plan that covers all persons in the United States. American health care is excellent, although Americans do not enjoy the world's longest life expectancy or the lowest infant mortality. Our great investments are in medical technology and in specialized personnel to treat specific illnesses. In fact, the existence of that expensive equipment and the fact that doctors tend to be specialists may have a direct impact on health care costs by serving as incentives for the use of unnecessary diagnostic and treatment procedures (Doyle).

Second, the high costs of health insurance plans make federal action necessary. The traditional policy has been for employers to purchase health insurance plans for their employees. In many cases, employees contribute to their own coverage and they usually have the option of purchasing coverage for their spouse and dependent children. Expansion of insurance plan costs is making it less likely that smaller companies and less profitable larger ones will be able to afford and offer such plans to their employees. In fact, as premiums increase, employees are losing coverage. The typical increase of about 9% per year in premium costs means that an additional 600,000 persons will lose their health insurance coverage (Miller, 2000).

No, National Health Insurance Would Be a Big Mistake! It is true that health insurance coverage has been the topic of many debates and speeches in recent years, but that fact certainly doesn't translate into a need for a national health insurance plan. There are many reasons to oppose such a plan, a few of which are explored below.

First, we can learn a great deal from the experience of our friends in Canada, Sweden, Great Britain and other nations that have national health insurance plans. The enormous costs of those plans burden the nation while health care is actually rationed to the citizenry.

Second, a national health care plan would produce a huge bureaucracy, that would issue numerous sets of regulations to which we would have to adhere.

Third, a national health care plan would increase the perception people have that their health care is free, which would cause even more overuse of the system than we now have. When health care costs are covered by insurance, whether private or governmental, we say that there is a *third party payer*. The simplest rules of economics provide an indicator of what happens next: people have no need to consider the cost of the goods and services they are using, and therefore tend to overuse them. If your doctor suggested that you might want to have a CAT scan for that painful shoulder, you would likely be inclined to go forward with the diagnostic tool represented by CAT technology. You would be using technology that was expensive to develop, expensive to maintain, and expensive to use, but what would it matter? You wouldn't get a bill at all, or the bill you receive would represent only a small fraction of the actual cost. Consider though your reaction if the entire cost of the CAT scan had to be covered by your own check. Would your response to the doctor's suggestion be somewhat different?

The real solution is to give consumers a reason to economize on their health care in the same way that they consider how much they are spending for groceries, an automobile, or a vacation. Laws could be rewritten to make consumers more conscious of health care costs and to reward them for money saved (Liebowitz, 1994).

Another aspect of the solution would be to encourage more healthful lifestyles. The Texas Department of Health has programs in place that seek to do just that. Among the lifestyle changes that could improve the health of many people—and thereby reduce the cost of health care to more reasonable levels—are the following: exercise and eat appropriately; use automobile seat belts regularly; make certain that vaccinations and immunizations are up-to-date; and quit smoking.

In conclusion, it seems that we are attacking the wrong problem. Instead of implementing a new cumbersome bureaucracy and incurring enormous expenses to establish national health insurance, what we ought to do is control health care costs by changing the way we approach paying for them and by instituting fundamental reforms in how we live.

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EXERCISE 8-1

THE ISSUE OF MEDICAL OVERSPENDING

The Pro & Con essay suggests that one of the reasons for high health care costs in the United States is the overuse of medical care by Americans. Think about that issue and answer the questions below.

Identify three characteristics of our health care system that might promote the overuse of medical care.

Keeping in mind the reasons you identified above, write a response to the following statement:

Legislation should be adopted to increase the annual deduction on all insurance policies to a minimum of at least \$1500. No insurance coverage would be provided in any calendar year until each covered person had incurred and paid for health care costs in excess of \$1500.00.

NAMESEAT NO.SCORE

EXERCISE 8-2

FINDING OUT ABOUT THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

This exercise asks you to research the National School Lunch Program. Information should be easy to find in the library or on the Internet.

1. In what year was the program established? _____
2. What department administers the School Lunch Program?

3. What was the stated purpose(s) for which the program was established?

4. What are the eligibility requirements for a child to participate in the program?

5. How many children participated in the program in recent years?

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

EXERCISE 8-3

FINDING OUT ABOUT THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

This exercise asks you to investigate the Food Stamp Program. Information should be available in the library or on the Internet.

1. In what year was the program established? _____
2. What department administers the Food Stamp Program?

3. What was the stated purpose(s) for which the program was established?

4. What are the eligibility requirements to participate in the program?

5. How many people participated in the program in recent years?

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

REVIEWING SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY

Each statement below is false. In the space provided for each statement, explain why it is incorrect.

1. The concept of Social Darwinism encouraged people to form a community and look out for one another.

2. The modern president most concerned about poverty was John F. Kennedy who was from a privileged background but nonetheless had a strong belief that poverty could and should be eradicated.

3. Poverty has been on the increase in the United States in recent years.

4. Adults who qualify as poor are characterized by their almost universal inability to get and hold a job.

5. Poverty is widespread and found in equal parts among virtually all racial, ethnic, and gender groups.

6. Conservatives believe there is no reason for any social welfare programs.

7. The largest group of welfare recipients are unwed, teenage mothers, almost all of whom left school as soon as they became pregnant.

8. Liberals believe that the poor bear virtually no responsibility for their impoverishment.

9. Medicare takes care of all the important health care needs of the elderly.

10. Workers are entitled to unemployment compensation when they need it because they pay for it with deductions from every paycheck.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

CHAPTER 9

EDUCATION POLICY

IN BRIEF, education policy remains one of the major topics both for the general public and for policymakers. In fact, President George W. Bush has made education reform one of the cornerstones of his presidency. No doubt our interest in education stems from several causes, including our recognition of the importance of education for the individual and the nation, coupled with our persistent belief, based on substantial evidence, that American children are less well educated than the youth of other highly developed nations.

We understand the importance that our system of public education represents. For generations, it has truly been the means by which people escape the drudgery of low paying jobs and a life lived paycheck to paycheck. At the same time, we wonder why so many students cannot read or do mathematics at the expected levels. Even worse, we hear about social problems, from ostracism and bullying to terrible violence.

Many people, aware of the importance of schools and of the need to improve our educational system, are studying various alternatives to education as we know it. This chapter explores the option of school vouchers and how they would work.

SCHOOL VOUCHERS AND EDUCATION

R. Kenneth Godwin

This chapter looks at a particular policy arena, elementary and secondary education, and a specific policy option, school vouchers. Although in many countries education is a national issue handled by the national government, in the United States education policy is largely a state and local issue. The Supreme Court has stepped in from time to time to reduce racial and ethnic segregation, to protect the rights of religious minorities, and to define what local practices violate the Constitution's prohibition against state establishment of religion. But state and local governments pay 90% of the costs of public education and decide almost 100% of what public schools must teach.

For almost its entire history the State of Texas has taken the position that it will provide free elementary and secondary education to students if they attend public schools, but parents who want a private school education will receive little or no state assistance. During the past decade, however, the Texas legislature has debated whether or not to use public funds to pay for private school education. "School vouchers" is the name generally used to refer to the policy of using public funds to pay the costs of private education. How did the issue of vouchers reach the political agenda in Texas and in other states? What are the arguments for and against the public funding of private schooling? What are the likely benefits and costs of changing how the state provides elementary and secondary education?

HOW DID VOUCHERS BECOME A POLITICAL ISSUE?

John Kingdon (1995) argues that for an issue to become part of the political agenda three things must occur. First, some people will recognize that a social problem exists and that it is appropriate for government to solve the problem. Second, there must be policy solutions available that might solve the problem. Finally, there must be "*political entrepreneurs*," people with political influence who will attempt to sell both the problem and the proposed solution to public officials who make policy.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a significant number of researchers reported that the current system of public education was failing many students. The most influential of these studies was *A Nation at Risk*, a 1983 report of the National Commission on Education. The National Commission wrote: "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." Numerous other studies quickly followed and came to similar conclusions. In addition, international comparisons of students in the United States with students in other industrialized countries showed that Americans were not doing well. Policymakers responded quickly to these studies, and most states initiated a series of reforms. Ross Perot headed the Texas commission that made recommendations for improving Texas schools. Among the reforms suggested and adopted were increased school funding, "No Pass, No Play," smaller class sizes, more required courses in math and science, and state-wide standardized tests for students and teachers. Unfortunately, neither in Texas nor in other states did these reforms significantly improve American education. A decade after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, although per student funding for education had doubled, American students continued to rank near the bottom in international comparisons. The failure of the reforms led policymakers to look for more radical alternatives. One such alternative was school vouchers.

Combined with the perceived failure of America's schools in educating students was the inability of public policies to integrate the schools. America's public schools became increasingly segregated

after 1973. Similarly, residential segregation also increased after 1980, especially for African Americans and Latinos. The 1974 Supreme Court decision *Milliken v. Bradley* (418 U.S. 717) virtually eliminated school busing across school districts for the purpose of integration. The increased residential segregation combined with the practice of assigning students to schools on the basis of residence has meant that public schools provide unequal educational opportunities to different ethnic groups (Orfield and Yun, 1999).

Two political scientists, Stanford's John Chubb and Terry Moe, provided the second factor that Kingdon argues is necessary for an issue to reach the political agenda: a possible solution to the problems identified. That solution was two-fold. First, get rid of democratic control of schools and the thousands of pages of conflicting regulations that accompany that control. Second, adopt a school voucher policy that would place control over a child's education in the hands of the child's parents. Published in 1990 by the Brookings Institution, a liberal think tank, *Politics, Markets, and America's Schools* took direct aim at the public schools. Chubb and Moe argued that education research consistently finds that successful schools have clear goals, vigorous leadership, teachers who control what they teach and how they teach it, rigorous academic goals, and an orderly environment. But democratic control of schools produces over-regulation, inconsistent and unclear goals, weak principals, and teachers who must teach their students in ways decided by state and local bureaucrats. In Texas, for example, the combined length of the *Texas Education Code* and the *Texas Administrative Code* governing K-12 education totals 1,473 double-column pages.

The way to improve schools, Chubb and Moe maintained, was not to add still more regulations. Instead, schools should have to compete for students. Competition forces all producers to look for ways to improve the product or for a way to lower the cost of production. Either change allows the producer to increase sales and, in the short term, profits. But competition forces all other producers to improve their products or lower their costs. If schools had to compete for customers, then schools with high dropout rates, low standardized test scores, and unsafe environments would be forced out of business. On the other hand, if a school substantially improved its students' reading and math skills, had few dropouts, and created a safe environment, then it would attract more students and the teachers, staff, and administrators in that school would receive bonuses or higher salaries. In a regulated school system, principals and teachers are judged by how well they follow the rules. In a competitive school system, they would be judged by how much students learned.

Chubb and Moe attempted to prove that private schools outperformed public schools by comparing the change in test scores between the 10th and 12th grades in public and private high schools. Using data on 60,000 students from more than 1000 schools, Chubb and Moe showed that even after controlling for the socioeconomic status of the family, the ethnicity and gender of the student, and past test scores, private schools were significantly more effective than public schools. They also showed that private schools had fewer regulations, their teachers had greater autonomy, and their principals exercised more effective leadership. Although Chubb and Moe did not address directly the problem of segregation, a voucher program could achieve integration by requiring all schools that accept vouchers to enroll a specified percentage of low-income students. This would integrate the schools across both ethnic and economic lines.

While Chubb and Moe were developing the theoretical foundations for school vouchers, two political entrepreneurs in Wisconsin were making vouchers public policy. In response to a lawsuit over the continued segregation of public schools in the Milwaukee area, Wisconsin adopted a voluntary school choice program that allowed white students in the suburbs to transfer to Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) while African American students in MPS could transfer to suburban schools. This voluntary

desegregation was largely unsuccessful. Few white students in the suburbs transferred into MPS, and few African American students in the inner-city transferred to suburban schools as only a small number of suburban schools agreed to accept the MPS students. However, private schools in the Milwaukee area indicated that they would be more than willing to accept the MPS students and would accept the state's average funding for those students in lieu of tuition.

At this point, then-Governor Tommy Thompson, a Republican, and State Representative Polly Williams, an African American community activist, formed a political alliance between Wisconsin Republicans and many African American leaders in Milwaukee. The coalition received considerable political support from, among others, the Catholic Church in Milwaukee and President George Bush (Bulman and Kirp, 2000). The Milwaukee voucher program became law in 1990. Initially it was limited to children whose incomes did not exceed 1.75 times the poverty level, and no more than 1.5 percent of MPS students could receive vouchers at any one time. Also, voucher students could not enroll in religious private schools. It appeared that, at least in Milwaukee, a problem, a proposed solution, and the necessary political entrepreneurs had come together. Vouchers were now on the political agenda as voucher bills were introduced in numerous state legislatures as well as in the United States Congress.

THE POLITICS OF SCHOOL VOUCHERS

Although the passage of the Milwaukee school voucher program for low-income students made it possible for school vouchers to reach the political agenda in many states, the Milwaukee program also stimulated substantial research on the relative quality of public and private schools. That research is far too extensive to describe in detail in this chapter, but a fair summary would be that for inner-city students, particularly for ethnic minority students, private religious schools substantially outperform public schools. For example, economist Derek Neal (1997) found that after statistically controlling for relevant socioeconomic and demographic variables as well as for the fact that parents who choose private schools probably value education more than parents who do not, minority students in the inner-city were 245 percent more likely to graduate from college if they attended a Catholic school rather than a public school! Attending a Catholic school also increased wages after schooling. For non-Hispanic white students in the inner-city, private schools have a slight advantage over public schools, but there are no differences in the outcomes of public and private school students who live in the suburbs.

Among the biggest obstacles to school voucher policies are inertia and fear. Most American parents are satisfied with their child's public schools and never consider alternatives (Moe, 2001). The children of the most politically active Americans—higher status citizens who live in the suburbs—generally receive an education that allows them to gain entrance to quality colleges and universities. When voucher opponents argue that vouchers will destroy public schools, suburban families have good reasons to fear those results. Even inner-city parents whose children receive a demonstrably inferior education often believe their child's public school is doing a good job. In the San Antonio Independent School District, a district where student scores on national standardized tests dropped two percentiles in math and one in reading for every year a student attended the public schools, 81 percent of parents assigned their child's school a grade of A or B (Godwin and Kemerer, forthcoming).

In the state legislature the National Education Association (NEA), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and their state affiliates lead the opposition to vouchers. Unfortunately for voucher proponents, these organizations often are the most powerful organized interest at the state level, and they are a dominant presence in state and national Democratic Party organizations. At its 2000 annual

convention the NEA increased member dues so that it could spend an *additional* \$7 million per year on its political action efforts. Just as important as the monetary contributions are the thousands of volunteers that teacher organizations supply to political campaigns. In return for this campaign assistance, the leaders of the Democratic Party at the state and national levels vigorously oppose all proposals for vouchers or tax credits for private schools. Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore, despite the fact that he had been unwilling to send his children to public schools, promised in his 2000 campaign that he would *never* support school vouchers.

Liberal interest groups have provided strong and effective opposition for any and all choice proposals that include private schools. The more active of these groups have been labor unions, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), People for the American Way (PAW), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (AU), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). These liberal interest groups maintain that vouchers will take funds away from public schools (which the groups believe are currently underfunded); that private schools will instill intolerance, racism, and sexism in students; and that vouchers violate the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution. These groups also maintain that a voucher policy would be unfair to those students who would remain in the public schools while the more easily educated students and more knowledgeable parents would move to private schools.

Perhaps the most interesting of the liberal groups that oppose vouchers is the NAACP. African Americans and Hispanics receive a demonstrably inferior education in America's public schools, and because of that, more than three-quarters of minority inner-city parents support vouchers (Moe, 2001, Table 7.2). Why does the NAACP oppose vouchers? First, becoming a public school teacher or administrator traditionally has been one of the best routes for African Americans to move into the middle class. Second, because of the tremendous campaign assistance that teachers' unions give black candidates for office, the NAACP does not wish to offend those unions. Third, African Americans and Hispanics have no reason to trust the Republican Party or the conservative and libertarian interest groups that are spearheading the drive for vouchers.

Hubert Morken and Jo Renée Formicola (1999) have shown that the *potential* pro-voucher forces stretch well beyond current private school parents, existing private schools, and churches with direct ties to parochial schools. Business interests often see vouchers as a matter of market competition and efficiency. Younger racial activists, some liberals, and many religious leaders believe that government should take the lead in providing equal freedom and equal educational opportunity. Conservatives assert that school choice is about empowering parents as well as restricting the domain of government activity. The Republican Party generally has led the legislative efforts for vouchers, but to achieve greater public funding for private schools the GOP needs to build a coalition that includes some minority leaders and some Democrats as well as the GOP's basic constituencies—the Christian Right, libertarians, and upper-middle and upper-income suburbanites.

Although they have made it onto the political agenda in most states, since the Milwaukee experiment vouchers have become public policy only in two additional locations: Cleveland, Ohio and the State of Florida. In Cleveland, vouchers are limited to low-income students. In Florida, students can receive a voucher only if their school repeatedly has received a grade of F on the state's evaluation criteria. In 2000, no school in Florida received such a grade for a second consecutive year. The Texas legislature considered voucher bills during every legislative session from 1991 to 1999. Although a pilot voucher program passed the Texas Senate in two sessions, the House rejected it on both occasions. In 1999, despite Governor Bush's support for a voucher policy, eleven senators signed a petition to block consideration of the bill in the Senate. Voucher proposals have not only failed in state

legislatures, they also have failed to win voter approval in statewide referenda in California, Michigan, and Colorado.

Why have voucher bills been unsuccessful in most states? It is because state governments, like the national government, give organized interests numerous opportunities to kill legislation. Proponents of new legislation must win numerous times with many different sets of legislators while opponents often need to win only once. State legislatures often have additional rules to slow down legislation. In Texas, if 11 of 31 state senators sign a petition to prevent a bill from coming to the floor for a vote, that effectively defeats the legislation. Therefore, even if legislation has the majority support of the population and a majority of legislators support it, organized opposition to the legislation is likely to defeat legislative proposals. As Chapter 7 pointed out, if the organized opposition has a strong positive image in society, then the passage of new legislation is particularly difficult.

HOW MIGHT EDUCATIONAL VOUCHERS BECOME PUBLIC POLICY?

Because of the many difficulties that face a bill in a state legislature, some voucher proponents have suggested that a voucher proposal will be more successful if it is presented as a referendum to the voters than as a bill to the state legislature (Coons and Sugarman, 2000). It is unlikely, however, that any state-wide voucher proposal will win a referendum. Political science research shows that to defeat initiatives, opponents need only scare or confuse voters (Hahn and Kamieniecki, 1987). The voucher referenda in California, Oregon, and Colorado have shown that opponents will spend the funds to create the necessary levels of fear and confusion. And many states do not have a referendum process.

How might a large-scale voucher proposal ultimately win approval? Several things must happen. First, there must be political entrepreneurs to lead the fight to legitimize the policy and to shepherd it through the legislature. Second, a leading elected politician with substantial political clout must agree to head the fight in the legislature. The most likely candidate for this role is a Republican governor, or, in Texas, the Lieutenant Governor. Third, some Democrats and minorities must sign on early in the development of the policy proposal. Unless advocates for the disadvantaged sign on at the beginning of the legislative process, proposed bills will lack the necessary provisions to increase equality of educational opportunity. Finally, it will be helpful if there is an event that increases public awareness of the problems that low-income and minority families have in obtaining an adequate education.

The national government provides an alternative way to introduce a broadly based voucher plan. During periods that the Republican Party controls all three branches of government it is possible that the federal government could finance a large-scale voucher program. The Department of Education could fund an experiment that guarantees that existing public schools would not suffer funding declines for several years. This could alleviate the fears of a sufficient number of legislators at the state level to allow a state to participate in the federal experiment. As an alternative, the federal government could increase choice with a substantial tax credit program to families with school-age children. To encourage participation by low-income families, the policy could provide a negative tax credit and no-interest loans to low-income families who signed the loan over to a private or out-of-district public school.

CONCLUSION

Diane Ravitch, a policy analyst in the Bush and Clinton administrations, recently made a compelling argument for an equity-based voucher bill (Ravitch, 1997). In that argument she cited a 1994 speech by President Clinton's Secretary of Education Richard Riley in which he made two statements that help to frame the choice debate. First, Riley stated that, "Some schools are excellent, some are improving, some have the remarkable capacity to change for the better, and some should never be called schools at all" (Riley, 1994). Second, he quoted John Dewey's famous statement, "What the best and wisest parent wants for his child, that must be what the community wants for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; it destroys our democracy." Ravitch argued that these quotes force us to consider two questions, "Who has to attend those schools that never should be called schools?" and, "What would the best and wisest parents do if their children were assigned to one of those schools?"

Of course we know the answers to this question, "Who has to attend the worst schools?" They are not the children of either public policymakers or of school teachers and administrators. They are minority students from poor families who lack the means to escape the schools to which they are assigned. What would the best and wisest parents do if their children were assigned to one of those schools? They would move to a different neighborhood, put their children into private schools, or homeschool them. Ravitch then addressed the most common responses that voucher opponents make to failing public schools: vouchers will remove the few families in the poorly performing schools who have the skills necessary to effectively complain to public officials. This will ensure that these schools do not improve and will further harm those students who remain behind. Ravitch's response is worth quoting at length.

What should we do about those children and those schools. Many people say, "We must reform those schools." Of course, they are right. For policy makers and academics this is the appropriate response to clearly inadequate schools. But for parents, this is an outrageous proposition, for our own children live this day, in the here and now, and they cannot wait around to see whether the school will get better in five or ten years. I suggest that we project our passion for our own children's welfare—as Dewey suggested—onto those parents who lack our money, power, and education; they love their children as much as we love ours. Their desperation about their children's future is greater than ours because they know that the odds are stacked against them. They should not be expected to wait patiently for the transformation of the failing institutions where their children are required to go each day, the places where the secretary of education says do not deserve to be called schools at all. We surely would not be willing to make the same sacrifice of our own children. Why should they? (Ravitch, 1997: 253)

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IS A SCHOOL VOUCHER POLICY THAT ALLOWS PUBLIC FUNDS TO FLOW TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS CONSTITUTIONAL?

A publicly funded voucher program may run headlong into the wall of separation between church and state found in the U.S. and state constitutions. The legality of school vouchers is complex because it forces judges to determine the proper relationship between constitutional restraints on establishment of religion and protection for individual free exercise of religion. Differences in constitutional provisions among the states add to the legal complexity.

Assume that your state constitution contains provisions specifying that no person shall be compelled to support any form of worship against his consent, that the state shall give no preference to any religious society, and that no public monies or portion thereof shall be drawn from the treasury for the support of any religious organization. Would a state plan giving parents a voucher that they could use at any public or private school violate that provision?

YES, it would violate constitutional provisions.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is clear, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion . . ." Any policy that uses tax money to send students to religious schools is violating the Constitution. The Supreme Court has ruled against public assistance to sectarian schools on numerous occasions. The most important of these rulings was the 1973 decision in *Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist*. There the Court invalidated a New York statute that provided financial assistance to low-income parents through tuition grants and tax deductions. The unconstitutionality of vouchers that can be used for sectarian schools is most clearly seen in the opinions of Judge Higginbotham who ruled the Milwaukee voucher program unconstitutional.

In 1995 the Wisconsin legislature modified the Milwaukee voucher policy to allow students to use their vouchers at sectarian schools. The NAACP and the Wisconsin Teachers Association immediately challenged the constitutionality of the voucher. Judge Higginbotham, a circuit Judge for a county for the Milwaukee area who previously had served as counsel to the Wisconsin NAACP, ruled that the inclusion of sectarian schools in the voucher program made the policy unconstitutional. Higginbotham maintained that the statute, "compelled Wisconsin citizens of varying religious faiths to support schools with their tax dollars that proselytize and attempt to inculcate them with beliefs contrary to their own." Higginbotham further argued that the real impact of the voucher program was to aid religious institutions with a clear mission to indoctrinate students with their religious beliefs. The fact that the voucher did not go directly to the schools but went to the parents who then could choose to use the voucher at either a private nonsectarian, private sectarian, or a public school was not relevant. . . . [T]he state cannot do indirectly what it cannot do directly. And that is provide money from the state treasury to pervasively sectarian religious schools for the purpose of educating Wisconsin students."

No, it would not violate constitutional provisions.

The First Amendment also includes the prohibition against “the free exercise” of religion. For decades public money was used to pay for the provision of education in religious schools. It was not until the anti-Catholic movements in the 1860s and 1870s that funding for explicitly religious schools was prohibited by the states. Many of the state constitutional provisions resulted from the anti-Catholic movement instituted by Rep. James Blaine of Maine in 1875. Blaine attempted to add a constitutional amendment to the U.S. Constitution to halt public funding of Catholic education. More recent court decisions concerning the Establishment Clause have been designed to protect religious minorities from having to accept religious indoctrination by Protestant Christians. As late as 1990, Denton High School’s band formed a cross and played “Onward Christian Soldiers” at the halftime of football games, and Lewisville High School had a “voluntary” prayer announced over the public address system. It is not a voucher system that violates the Establishment Clause, but the funding of only public schools where students must learn the moral values of the dominant majority. If the state makes funding available to both public and private schools and does not discriminate against schools because they are religious, then public policy is consistent with the First Amendment.

Although Judge Higginbotham’s decision was upheld by the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ultimately overturned him. That court ruled that the Wisconsin constitutional provision on the separation of church and state was coextensive with the U.S. Constitution. Relying on previous U.S. Supreme Court precedents, the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled the Milwaukee plan constitutional. When the Wisconsin teachers’ union attempted to appeal this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Court refused to hear the case. The U. S. Supreme Court sent another indication that voucher plans could be constitutional when a federal judge in Ohio ordered the suspension of the Cleveland voucher plan pending a ruling on its constitutionality. The State of Ohio filed an emergency motion with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit asking that the order be set aside, but before the Sixth Circuit could rule, the U.S. Supreme Court took the unusual action of granting the Ohio attorney general’s request to set aside the ruling and to allow the voucher program to continue. Presumably, if the majority of the Supreme Court thought that the Cleveland voucher program violated either the U.S. Constitution or the Ohio Constitution, it would have heard the Wisconsin case and would not have intervened in the Ohio decision.

EDUCATION POLICY AND VOUCHERS

1. What three factors are necessary for a social issue to become part of the political agenda?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
2. What was the major argument of Chubb and Moe concerning why vouchers would lead to better education?

3. Which students are most likely to be helped by attending private schools?

4. Name four groups that oppose school vouchers.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
 - D. _____
5. What states currently have a publicly funded voucher program?
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____

6. Why is it so hard to pass a voucher policy at the state level?

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

EXERCISES 9-2

EXERCISES 9-2

[illegible][illegible]

EXERCISE 9-3

PRO & CON

According to the Pro & Con reading on the constitutionality of vouchers, what was the reason that governments originally stopped funding private schools?

What action did the U.S. Supreme Court take concerning the Cleveland voucher policy?

What state provides vouchers to students whose school consistently fails the state's evaluation criteria?

Using the arguments in the Pro & Con section, provide an argument for why vouchers are constitutional or why they are unconstitutional. Your essay need not represent your opinion on this issue.

NAME	SEAT No.	SCORE

EXERCISE 9-4

LEGAL ISSUES

Pretend that you are behind John Rawls’ “veil of ignorance.” This is an imaginary location where you are one of several representatives who will choose the rules their society will use to promote justice. Those rules include deciding whether a child’s parents or the state should decide the content of the child’s education and how to present that content. You, like all other representatives, are rational and know that when you step from behind the veil you will live in the United States. But you do not know into which geographic area you will live, when you will live there, or the characteristics you will have. You may be rich or poor, a fundamentalist Muslim or secular humanist, a feminist or a paternalist, smart or stupid, and you could be a member of either a majority or a minority ethnic group. (Source: John Rawls. A Theory of Justice. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 136-141.

1. To whom will you give principal control over curriculum and pedagogy, a child’s parents or the state?
2. Will you give the majority the right to use government to determine the values and beliefs that all students must learn?
3. If so, will the government’s decision-making power be at the national, state, or local level?

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT No.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

CHAPTER 10

GLOBAL POLICY

IN BRIEF, centuries ago, a nation could successfully practice isolation, but in the twenty-first century, every nation is touched to a greater or lesser extent by the economic, political, social, and diplomatic policies of other nations. There are numerous examples of world integration:

- The World Trade Organization exercises powerful controls over trade policies to the extent that the United States and other nations have been forced to change legislation and policy to conform to WTO rules.
- The nations of the world, acting through the United Nations, have made it clear that human rights violations will not be tolerated just because the offending nation claims rights associated with national sovereignty.
- The Internet respects no national boundaries, making it an important means of communication in political dictatorships or geographically isolated areas of the world.
- Worldwide epidemics are matters of great concern, whether it is the Ebola virus or foot and mouth disease.

When any other continent on the globe is no more than hours away by airplane or seconds away by electronic mail, it is no overstatement to say that we have become a global village.

The United States is the world's strongest power and by default has had to assume the mantle of world leadership. It is a role that we are unlikely to discard soon, because whatever happens in the world is a matter of concern to us.

In this chapter, the author introduces you to some of the problems faced by policy makers and the models they follow to understand and deal with them. Perhaps your study of global policy will result in a better understanding of the complex world in which our leaders must function. There are difficulties everyday as we attempt to develop and pursue policies that will work in what has become a small world.

U. S. FOREIGN POLICY TODAY

Steve Poe

As we prepare this edition of the workbook, President George W. Bush has been in office just a few months, but he has already had to deal with many foreign policy issues, including a crisis that erupted when a U.S. Navy plane made an emergency landing on Chinese soil following an encounter with a Chinese Air Force plane. At this point, we assume that President Bush is working with his advisors to formulate the foreign policy principles and strategies that will characterize his administration. However, his two immediate predecessors in the presidency, Bill Clinton and George Bush (father of the current President Bush), were both criticized sharply for what the public viewed as a lack of direction in their foreign policies. Although Bill Clinton was an able public relations president on his many trips abroad, including travel to Latin America, China, and Africa, critics have argued that Clinton's actual policies were reactive and devoid of much strategic thought. Ironically, as a first-time presidential candidate, Clinton himself took to the campaign trail criticizing the first president Bush for his lack of vision in foreign policy and promising a "fresh assessment" of U.S. foreign policy objectives if he were elected president.

Why do you suppose two consecutive American presidents have been subjected to such similar criticism? It is possible, one supposes, that we just happened to elect two leaders in a row who lacked (in the now famous words of former President Bush) "the vision thing." Yet before we come to that rather convenient conclusion, perhaps we should consider another alternative: that changes in international politics made foreign policy making more difficult for Bush and Clinton, and for President George W. Bush, whose presidency is still unfolding.

CHANGES DUE TO SOVIET DECLINE

Many American government textbooks discuss the demolition of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and show the by-now-famous image of young Germans (and no doubt a few young Americans on vacation) partying on the remains of the divider that had separated East and West Berlin for nearly thirty years. This event and the subsequent breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 signaled great changes in the international environment that may help us to understand the difficulties our leaders are currently facing in conducting U.S. foreign policy. Since World War II, the major rival of the United States had been a second superpower, the Soviet Union, a country that subscribed to the communist teachings of Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin. For nearly 45 years following World War II, U.S. foreign policy had been guided by the concept of *containment* of communism. The idea of containment was first outlined in the "X" paper, written by State Department official George Kennan and submitted anonymously to *Foreign Affairs*, a prominent journal read by foreign-policy analysts. In this 1947 article, Kennan discussed the U.S. stance toward the Soviet Union, which many believed was bent on world domination. In response to this perceived threat, Kennan argued that the main element of U.S. foreign policy should be the "*long-term, patient, but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive capabilities*" (Kennan 1947:566-82).

Kennan's ideas were adopted by President Harry Truman who established the Truman Doctrine. Essentially, this doctrine stated that whenever American leaders saw that an anti-communist government was threatened—whether by communist insurgency, invasion, or diplomatic pressure—the United States would come to its aid in an effort to keep the Soviet Union in check. By and large, containment was accepted as the guiding principle of foreign policy by the leaders of both political parties, making a *bipartisan* foreign policy, on which both parties tended to agree, possible.

That is not to say that there wasn't some controversy regarding the particulars of how containment would be applied. U.S. participation in the Korean War in the 1950s, the Vietnam War in the 1950s through the 1970s, and the invasion of Grenada in the 1980s were manifestations of containment and the Truman Doctrine. Also related to containment were the covert activities the U.S. undertook to overthrow socialist governments in such places as Angola, Chile, and Nicaragua. In Iran, Nicaragua, and El Salvador the U.S. supported anti-communist, but very repressive and undemocratic governments in reaction to the perceived threat posed by the spread of communism. Many of these activities were opposed by significant percentages of the populace and by opposition leaders in Congress. Still, throughout the postwar period there was broad agreement on containment as a principle to guide U.S. foreign policy.

Perhaps by now you can see the dilemma that recent presidents have faced. Suddenly the Communists no longer controlled Russia. Though some would argue that there is the possibility that hard-line Communists could someday gain power over Russia once again, that scenario no longer seems as likely. Even if it did happen, the Communists would rule over a much smaller country that has lost its empire and possesses far less military might. Thus containment of communism, the guiding light of U.S. foreign policy for many years, is outmoded. This is what has led to some apparent indecision where foreign policy is concerned. Government officials accustomed to making choices based on how best to achieve containment are now left searching for the foundations on which a new U.S. foreign policy should be based.

Even now, close to a decade after the fall of the Soviet Union the United States is still trying to find its bearings where foreign policy in the new international system is concerned. Today's foreign policy decision makers are still grappling with the question of "Where should we go from here?" and are involved in a political wrestling match to decide what the United States will do.

Today foreign policy is not bipartisan. Increasingly we have seen Congress reasserting its foreign policy powers, frequently opposing the president's agenda. The Madisonian features of our government (e.g., checks and balances, separation of powers) are becoming very important where foreign policy is concerned (Lieber 1997). Congressional leaders have even traveled abroad and made statements criticizing the foreign policies of their own president. All this divisiveness may be linked to the disappearance of the Soviet threat, which led many Americans and their leaders to believe that politics should stop at the water's edge, or put another way, that the United States should speak with one voice where foreign policy is concerned.

The absence of an overriding threat also has led the public and government officials to shift more of their attention to domestic, as opposed to foreign policy issues. This is true even at the highest levels of government. Early in his first term in office, three of President Clinton's top foreign policy advisers urged him to give more effort and attention to foreign policy. They asked that he devote one hour a week for the discussion of foreign affairs. Clinton finally agreed, but added the words, "when possible" (Lieber 1997:13).

Still foreign policy is a very important pursuit, in a world where countries and peoples are becoming increasingly interdependent. Now that containment as we knew it is a thing of the past, there are two major schools of thought on where U.S. foreign policy should head in the future. The first places greater emphasis on domestic concerns.

THE ARGUMENT FOR RETRENCHMENT: THE NEO-ISOLATIONISTS

An argument for a retrenchment, or partial withdrawal of U.S. global commitments, is made by the *neo-isolationists*. The prefix *neo* is presumably added by analysts to indicate that today's isolationism is somehow new and different from the isolationist sentiment that existed in previous eras of U.S. history. A reading of some of the writers in this school indicates one major difference is that the neo-isolationist does not recommend a total withdrawal from international political commitments that might have been supported by some isolationists in America's past.

The neo-isolationist argument is a modern manifestation of the principle of isolationism, recommended by George Washington in his Farewell Address to the Nation in 1796. In this speech, he argued that the United States should trade with all nations on an equal basis but warned of the dangers involved in having strong political attachments or *entanglements* with allies, or strong and enduring antipathy for its enemies. Either, he thought, would tend to involve the United States in wars not in its best interest.

Neo-isolationists today argue that the United States has indeed been overly involved in the affairs of foreign countries in the decades since World War II. One such thinker is Paul Kennedy, a professor at Yale, who developed a theory regarding the causes of the decline of great powers in world history. Kennedy's *imperial overstretch* hypothesis states that world powers in history have typically brought on their own decline relative to other countries by spending too great a percentage of their economic resources to protect their political position abroad (Kennedy 1987).

With regard to the present-day United States, it is argued that after World War II the United States became too preoccupied with the Soviet Union and other threats abroad, and as a result of this commitment of resources, American industry and agriculture have been in a state of relative decline. From 1950 to the early 1980s the U.S. share of the total global product declined from a third to a little more than a fifth (Block 1981). The problem facing our foreign policy leaders today is not how to reverse this trend, for reversal would be improbable if not impossible. Rather, the best our leaders can hope to achieve is to manage events such "that the *relative* erosion of the United States' position takes place slowly and smoothly, and is not accelerated" (Kennedy 1987:534).

A second argument made by neo-isolationists is that the recent changes in the international system have greatly decreased the degree to which the survival of the United States is threatened by foreign countries. Only a decade ago, the United States was threatened by instantaneous obliteration at the push of the Soviet nuclear button. Today's problems (nuclear proliferation, the importation of illegal drugs, ethnic clashes, and international terrorists, to name a few) are serious to be sure, but they are not as immediately pressing, and none is likely to lead instantaneously to our destruction (Clarke 1993).

It should be made clear that most neo-isolationists do not contend that the United States should withdraw completely from the international community. They do, however, generally believe that the United States should decrease its military and political commitments abroad in line with their perception that the threat to their country has dissipated. In the future, they state, the United States should carefully choose to involve itself in situations only when its interests clearly warrant such a commitment.

A careful observer is apt to see evidence of neo-isolationist thought in the rhetoric of members of both parties today. Particularly in his early years in office, President Clinton, a Democrat, managed to push successfully for a decreasing military budget, while at the same time trying to commit scarce resources to solving domestic problems, such as poverty, education, drug abuse and health care. More

recently, Congressional Republicans, as well as some conservative Democrats have also adopted some neo-isolationist ideas. They have fought *multilateral foreign policy* involvement by the United States, where this country is involved in cooperative efforts with a host of other countries in institutions like the United Nations (U.N.) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They have opposed another sort of multilateral effort, U.N. peace-keeping missions, on the grounds that such involvement is at odds with American interests. Finally, they have kept the United States from paying what it owes to the United Nations. Each of these positions is consistent with neo-isolationist ideas.

THE INTERNATIONALIST ARGUMENT FOR CONTINUED COMMITMENT

The scholars and policy-makers who are arguing that the United States should continue its international commitments have a very different interpretation of the “facts.” First, the *internationalists* strongly disagree with Professor Paul Kennedy’s contention that the United States is in a state of decline. In a rebuttal to Kennedy’s argument, Joseph Nye of Harvard argues that yes, the U.S. economy appears to be in a state of decline if one compares the percentage of the global product it has today with that which it had immediately following World War II, but, according to Nye, the use of the period following the war as a baseline is misleading. At that point in time, the United States was at an artificial high relative to other countries because of the depressed state of the European economies that had been crippled by the war. The decline in the U.S. share of world product since World War II reflects the fact that economies that had been destroyed by the war have rebuilt. If one looks at the data, one finds that the U.S. share of global product has actually held steady at a little over a fifth of the total since the 1970s. Thus, it is argued, the decreasing U.S. share of world production reflects a return to the natural state during the 1950s and 1960s after an artificial high following World War II (Nye, Jr. 1990).

The internationalist goes on to say that if one considers each of the powerful countries in the world system, the United States is the only one that has all of the attributes one would expect a superpower to possess. The ex-Soviet Union has crippling economic problems and is never again likely to be a unified political force. China, which some consider to be a contender for superpower status, also lacks economic strength and is preoccupied with domestic and regional concerns. Japan, while economically strong, produces only about 10 percent of the global product—less than half of that of the United States—and is not a military power by any means. Finally, the European Community, a currently developing confederation of several major European countries, may someday approach superpower status. But can the several nations that are involved ever unite to act as if they were one? (Nye, Jr. 1990:115-172). Instead of seeing the United States as a nation in decline, the internationalist is optimistic about the prospects for American power in the future. In fact, in 1990 one analyst observed that in the wake of the Cold War, the United States was the world’s only superpower, an argument that arguably holds even today (Krauthammer 1990).

Finally, the internationalist states that the world is a much more complex place than it was only a few years ago and that the probability of war has increased. Arms races between countries like Pakistan and India may become nuclear wars that are dangerous to citizens of the United States and the rest of the world’s people. International terrorism and ethnic and nationalist conflicts may pose dangers to the security and the well-being of the United States and its allies. Thus, the internationalist would argue that we need to be ready to respond militarily to a variety of possible threats at a moment’s notice. Both Congress and President Bush seem willing to increase the military budget, a move that is consistent with this argument.

All of our difficulties are not so susceptible to military solutions, however. Other problems such as the greenhouse effect, the dissipation of the ozone layer, and starvation also have arisen and will likely be with us for many years. Some would argue that the United States should be concerned with international efforts to promote human rights for peoples around the world (Poe et al. 1994). All of these are global problems that require international cooperation to achieve satisfactory solutions. Why should the United States, the only superpower in the world, not take the lead? Indeed, many would argue, it is not only in our best interest to do so, it is our solemn duty (Nitze 1990:1-14; Krauthammer 1990:44).

As we move into the twenty-first century, Democratic leaders tend to accept the premise that the United States has a purpose beyond simply promoting its own interests in world politics. They accuse Republicans, who tend to disagree, of being isolationists. For their part, Republican leaders tend to say that U.S. interests should be the sole criterion on which U.S. foreign policy is based. They accuse the Democrats of being multilateralists who would compromise U.S. interests (Schneider 1997).

Recent Republican rhetoric has tended to favor a *unilateral foreign policy* commitment in world politics, whereby the United States makes important foreign policy decisions alone, staying separate from and independent of multilateral (multi-country) institutions like the U.N., and not taking part in multilateral operations like the efforts to bring peace to the Balkans. Unilateralism is not an isolationist doctrine, strictly speaking, because it admits the need to take part in international affairs. However, in the unilateralist argument we again see some isolationist ideas, such as the distrust of foreign governments and unwillingness to take part in cooperative endeavors. Many neo-isolationists favor a unilateral foreign policy.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It has now been more than a decade since the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union dissolved, thus changing the international scene and foreign policy debates. Although there is a great deal of rhetoric, what seems to be lacking is a doctrine or decision rule that can be used as a guide, and that is accepted by both major political parties and by both the President and the Congress.

Many foreign policy analysts are concerned by the absence of such a guiding principle. Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, argues that life without such a principle is actually quite dangerous, for without one American foreign policy may be determined by a public “(s)tirred by the images that flicker across the TV screen...all too ready for action without reckoning the costs” (Schlesinger 1993:17-28). The ill-fated U.S. involvement in Somalia may be cited as a supporting example here if, as some maintain, it was motivated by the desire to placate a public upset by pictures of starving Somali children appearing each night on the evening news. It also is possible that without such a principle in place, foreign policy is more prone to being affected by interest groups in ways that are adverse to the interests of the country as a whole. If one agrees with these positions, then it is imperative that we debate the issues and reach a thoughtful conclusion on the direction of future U.S. foreign policy, as soon as possible, to avoid future foreign policy debacles.

Because the United States is a republican government based on democratic principles, it is up to our elected and appointed officials to make the final choices on most policies. Yet, if we are to believe political historians, the public will likely have its say in what the United States will do as well. What private citizens (e.g., college students and professors) think on this issue is at least somewhat important because it will help us to decide how to vote and thus will play a part in our choice of the next president. Hopefully this chapter will be helpful in assisting you in your efforts to reason through what you think, and to develop your own informed position on the question of where U.S. foreign policy should go in the future.

SHOULD U.S. DECISION-MAKERS STOP CONSIDERING HUMAN RIGHTS WHEN MAKING FOREIGN POLICIES?

YES!

I'm going to argue that U. S. policy makers should not worry about human rights conditions in other countries when they are making foreign policy. Though I could give you many arguments, I will only make the two arguments I consider strongest.

First, it was not the design of our Founding Fathers to have our government looking out for the rights of other peoples around the world. The Preamble of the U.S. Constitution says that our government is established to "insure DOMESTIC tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to OURSELVES and OUR posterity" (emphasis added). It is no coincidence it makes no mention of other countries. The purpose of our government is to look out for ourselves first, toward the security and the well-being of the American people. This is consistent with a school of thought on international relations called *political realism*, which argues that because world politics are dangerous and chaotic, national leaders' goals should be to increase their countries' power and national security.

Political realism is the most accurate way to look at international relations precisely because the world is a very dangerous place. Problems like the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, the arms race between India and Pakistan, and terrorists like the ones who recently bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania threaten our national security on a daily basis. Unlike most domestic political systems there is no police force in world politics, and therefore any of the so-called "international laws" made by the United Nations and other organizations cannot be enforced. As a result, the international system is in a state of nature very much like that discussed by Hobbes, only the primary actors are nation-states instead of individuals. The world political system is in an anarchy in which the most powerful countries, militarily and economically, tend to control things. Countries like the United States, China, Japan, and multinational entities like the European Union have more power, and they use it to achieve their political ends. Smaller and less powerful countries like Bolivia and Ghana tend to languish, plagued by severe economic problems they do not have the might to solve.

In such a dangerous, chaotic world it is not in the best interest of the United States to compromise its power and security by looking out for the welfare of others. One instance where U.S. foreign policy got off track is our recent involvement in the Balkans. Among the reasons cited for our involvement was to stop "ethnic cleansing." What have we gained from this effort? We have spent a tremendous amount of money, and some American servicemen have lost their lives. Similar arguments can be made with regard to other humanitarian actions in Somalia and Haiti, where human rights abuses have continued even after American involvement. Why should we spend our money, and give our lives in

CON
&
PRO

an unsuccessful effort to guarantee humane treatment of non-Americans? The U.S. did not gain any power or security from these actions, and therefore a good realist would say these actions simply were not good foreign policy.

Second, if I may stray away from the traditional realist argument for a moment, I'd like to know who the United States is that it should be able to tell other countries what to do. The United States has had its own human rights problems at home. For example, over the course of a couple of centuries, Native Americans were forcibly removed from the land they had inhabited for many generations. Many were killed by soldiers, poverty and disease, and those who survived were moved onto tiny reservations where the land is generally of very poor quality.

Many Americans today are unaware of the brutality that took place in the removal process. Women often were kidnapped and raped. U.S. soldiers sometimes brutally murdered every inhabitant of Indian camps save the few witnesses lucky enough to escape, executing all adult inhabitants of the camps and Indian children as well. In one instance, soldiers reportedly killed infants by throwing them into fires (Winnemucca 1991). In another, separate instance, soldiers mutilated the bodies of the dead. Some actually wore slaughtered Indian women's private parts on their hats as a macabre trophy (Brown 1970:90). The rallying cry of the Colonel in charge of one of the massacres was "Kill and scalp, big and little, nits make lice...". These reprehensible sentiments and actions are quite similar to those of the Nazis, in their effort to exterminate the Jews in World War II. It is no wonder that the Native American population plummeted from an estimated 1.5 million at the time of their first contact with whites, to an estimated 237,000 in the year of 1900 (Nabakov 1991:259).

As you no doubt know, the American Indian is not the only minority to have been abused in the United States. Many Blacks perished while held by the chains of slavery, and for many years after they were freed. Hate crimes still occur today, one example being that which occurred in 1998 in Jasper, Texas. There an older African American man was killed by White Supremacists who dragged him behind their car. African Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics and women do not have the economic well-being of others in our society, a remnant of past discrimination and present biases. Ill and unfair treatment of minorities by police officers, and uneven sentencing by judges and juries is still the reality in many locales around the country.

With a human rights record like this, it is no wonder that many East Asian governments and countries from the Arab world have voiced resentment at U.S. attempts to impose its values on other countries (Tonelson 1994/1995). Such governments often accuse the United States of trying to force other countries to live up to its Western ideas, which are not accepted by their cultures. If you were a leader of a government facing sanctions for human rights abuses, you too would surely accuse the United States of being hypocritical, asking, "Who are you to talk?"

In summary, the United States is certainly not in a position to sit and cast judgment on other societies where human rights are concerned. Before judging others it should, at the very least, get its own house in order. However, even if U.S. human rights practices were exemplary, its leaders should not make foreign policies on the basis of human rights concerns because such policies would not be in the best interests of U.S. citizens. As realists argue, in such a dangerous world, policy makers should be concerned with U.S. security, not with how governments abroad act toward their own citizens. And we have our own problems, such as a failed education system, a huge debt, and crumbling infrastructure to deal with. Let's let other governments deal with their problems. We should focus on our own.

NO! My opponent has put me on the defensive, so let me begin by addressing some of the points he made. Unfortunately, he is quite correct in citing the serious abuses perpetrated against certain groups in American society. Discrimination still exists in the United States today. Thankfully, with an occasional unfortunate exception like that which occurred in Jasper, the most serious abuses are in our past, and rarely, today, is such an abuse perpetrated by the U.S. government against the American people.

Unfortunately, in most of the world's countries this is not true. I won't go into the gory details because my opponent probably already has succeeded in making you sick to your stomach with his examples from U.S. history. Suffice it to say that most of the countries in today's world imprison persons whose only "crime" was to speak their minds. Frequently they are tortured and kept in deplorable conditions. Many of the world's governments kidnap and execute people who oppose them. Some even execute people almost randomly, in order to scare those who would speak against the government so that they keep quiet. Abuses like the ones my opponent talked about, in American history, are presently a reality in many countries around the world. If you don't believe me, take a look at the country-by-country reports compiled by Amnesty International (see the annual reports at <http://www.amnesty.org/>), or read Kate Millett's book, *The Politics of Cruelty* (1994).

Though the United States is not perfect (no country is), surely we Americans and our government are entitled to speak against such clear crimes against humanity, just like the people of other countries around the world. After all, the idea that people should not be subjected to such treatment is not just a Western idea—it has roots in all the world's major religions and in secular humanist thought as well. Some actions are simply so deplorable that nearly every sane person in the world can agree they are wrong. Would any person of sound mind really be able to persuasively argue that Hitler had the right to kill the Jews? Nearly all people agree that humans should have the right not to be "exterminated" in the way that the Jews were in Nazi Germany, and therefore that idea has been codified in international laws.

My opponent, who leans toward the views of a political realist, would have the United States be quite disinterested in human rights conditions abroad. If he had his way policy makers would ignore serious crimes against humanity when making foreign policies. The United States would just stand on the sidelines and watch innocent and unarmed people being slaughtered by present-day Adolf Hitlers. Perhaps even worse, if it strictly followed this approach the United States would support some of the governments that were perpetrating these abuses, because, for example, it might be in our economic and political interests to support repressive oil-rich governments. Under such policies American taxpayers would be, in effect, accomplices to murder. The realist approach is morally bankrupt. It would be totally unsatisfactory to the American people, who do, after all, hold deeply rooted moral and religious beliefs.

Actually, the United States has had some experience with realist policies that overlooked human rights concerns. The results were pretty disastrous. At times during the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union, the United States deliberately overlooked governments' human rights abuses if the government happened to be friendly to the United States. The dictatorial and oppressive government of the Shah of Iran, which the U.S. government had supported because he was friendly and non-communist, was overthrown by its opponents. Not surprisingly, a very anti-American regime took power and that regime has been a thorn in the side of the United States ever since. Had the United States not supported the Shah when he was abusing his political opponents it is doubtful that the present government would be so anti-American.

The United States also has supported the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and other countries that imprisoned, kidnapped and executed political opponents. Some of these governments used U.S. military assistance to oppress citizens who dared to speak against the government. As a result of these errors in judgment and others, the United States has lost power and prestige in Latin America, the Middle East, and around the world.

Clearly foreign policy needs to be much more than a cold and calculated quest for more power. As an *idealist* I believe that morality and ideals are important to international relations, too, and leaders should pay attention to them. In fact, leaders should strive to make the world a better and safer place for all people, not just for Americans, when they have the opportunity to do so.

I too can cite one of this country's core documents to support my argument. You will remember that the Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal and that they "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights," among them are the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It does not say that these rights belong to American men, but men in general. (and presumably if he were writing today Jefferson would include women as well.) As stated in the Declaration, the people of other countries have the same rights as do Americans. That is part of our creed that is sometimes conveniently overlooked by people like my opponent.

Of course, I would not argue that it is in America's power to provide everyone in the world with these rights. We cannot try to tackle every human rights problem in the world, because it would deplete our limited resources to do so. However, *we should take stands to improve human rights conditions abroad, in the many instances where it would not significantly harm U.S. security and well-being to do so.*

Contrary to what my opponent said, policies enacted with human rights considerations in mind have, at times, been successful. Clearly economic sanctions by the United States and other countries played a big part in bringing about a relatively peaceful change of power in South Africa, where the minority whites had erected a very repressive system to keep the majority of South Africans, who were Black, out of political power. The situation in South Africa is much better today than it was fifteen years ago. Unfortunately, human rights abuses still occur in South Africa as they do in Haiti, Bosnia, and other countries where our policies and actions have addressed human rights concerns. The sad fact of the matter is that human rights abuse probably will continue in many countries for some time to come, regardless of what the United States and its allies do. That doesn't mean that U.S. human rights policies have been a failure, as my opponent suggests. No policy can reasonably be expected to create a utopia on earth. A superior criterion for success would be to ask whether the policy has made a difference, for the better.

In summary, U.S. foreign policy can be used to provide carrots and sticks that would encourage governments to live up to widely accepted human rights standards. This can frequently be done without putting U.S. security at risk, and we would save lives and alleviate some of the human suffering around the world in the process. Human rights should be a consideration in U.S. foreign policy.

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HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOREIGN POLICY: REALISM VS. IDEALISM

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage you to think about U.S. foreign policy and make decisions about U.S. interests abroad. In the real world foreign policy makers must weigh the idealist's concerns, like human rights, against the realist's concern for power and national security. This activity asks you to weigh these two competing issues. After each student completes the exercise, you may want to share ideas in small groups, then have the whole class ponder whether idealism or realism motivated their decisions.

TOPIC: HUMAN RIGHTS IN FOREIGN AID DECISION-MAKING SIMULATION: HOW IMPORTANT ARE IDEALS? SCENARIO:

You are on a foreign policy making committee in a large developed country that allocates foreign aid. It is up to you to request of the legislature a certain amount of money for each country that has been included in past aid programs. The chief executive has informed you that she would like to continue the aid program. She has told you that you must allocate ten monetary units among these three countries. (You may think of each monetary unit as being worth a million dollars, if you wish.) You may choose to allocate aid only under certain conditions (e.g., attach strings to the aid), but if you do so you must indicate what those strings are.

COUNTRIES: The three countries are:

1. UPPER TROMBONIA:

This is a small, undeveloped country. The poor in the country suffer from malnutrition and lack of education. The country has little or no strategic importance. It has been a fairly stable republic based on democratic principles since 1970.

2. MIDDLE TROMBONIA:

This is another poor country where the poor suffer from malnutrition and lack of education. The country has little or no strategic importance to your government. Lately the political situation has been unstable. The democratically elected president of the country and his cabinet were executed by the new military dictators in April. Some 500 persons (estimated) disappeared from their homes overnight. Most of these are presumed by Amnesty International and our own intelligence to be dead. There are reports of imprisonment and torture of political prisoners.

3. LOWER TROMBONIA:

This is yet another country where the poor suffer the same plight. This country is important to your country's interests, due to the presence of the rare mineral, trombonium, that is used in constructing various important technologies commonly thought vital to your national interests. Unfortunately, this country, too, is unstable. There was a military coup in June, and a thousand political opponents of the government have been executed. Amnesty International has condemned the military leaders for their complete lack of regard for human rights.

ACTIVITY:

First, each student should indicate how much aid they would give to each country, and their reasoning behind this figure. Remember you only have 10 monetary units to allocate among the 3 countries.

Use the worksheet to indicate your personal preferences for how the aid will be divided and allocated. After completing the worksheet, reflect on whether realist or idealist thinking affected your decisions.

FOREIGN AID SIMULATION WORKSHEET
YOUR PERSONAL PREFERENCES

COUNTRY #1: UPPER TROMBONIA

1. How much aid? _____
2. Indicate conditions of the aid, if any

3. Justification?

COUNTRY #2: MIDDLE TROMBONIA

1. How much aid? _____
2. Indicate conditions of the aid, if any

3. Justification?

COUNTRY #3: LOWER TROMBONIA

1. How much aid? _____
2. Indicate conditions of the aid, if any

3. Justification?

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

USING U.S. MILITARY FORCE

This exercise provides an opportunity to apply to a relatively current foreign-policy event some of the concepts in the chapter. This is a library assignment in which students are asked to do some research on an American foreign-policy event.

1. First, choose an event during the last few years for which U.S. foreign policy makers have had to decide whether to use military force. Some examples are the events in Somalia, Iraq and Kuwait, and the Balkans. If some new events unfold during the semester, by all means go for it!! List below the event you selected and the time period during which it took place.

2. To prepare this assignment, you will need to go to the library. You are to find two articles about the event you chose. One of the articles should take an internationalist position on the event; the other article should take a neo-isolationist position.

Some publications in which such articles might appear include the *National Review*, the *New Republic*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The New York Times*, *Foreign Policy*, and *Foreign Affairs*.

3. Internationalist Article: List below the author, title, source, and date of the article you selected. In the space below, explain why this article represents an internationalist position.

4. Neo-isolationist Article: List below the author, title, source and date of the article you selected. In the space below explain why this article represents a neo-isolationist position.

5. With which position do you agree? Explain your reasoning.

NAME

SEAT NO.

SCORE

EXERCISE 10-3

LEARNING IMPORTANT TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Complete this exercise to check your knowledge of important terms and concepts on this topic.

Part A. Define the following terms:

1. Containment

2. Truman Doctrine

3. Entanglements

4. Imperial overstretch

5. Unilateralism

6. Multilateralism

7. Bipartisan foreign policy

Part B. Outline the major arguments of the Neo-Isolationists and the Internationalists.

The Neo-Isolationist argument:

The Internationalist argument:

NAMESEAT NO.SCORE

CHAPTER REVIEW

Fill in the blanks below with the correct name or term. This exercise should provide a quick review of the essay's main ideas.

1. _____ Name of major adversary of the United States which broke up in 1991.
2. _____ Kind of political ideology that was opposed by the United States in its foreign policy against the Soviet Union, Cuba, and East Germany.
3. _____ President who warned the nation against strong political attachments to other nations.
4. _____ Concept developed by Paul Kennedy to explain decline of nations.
5. _____ Name of major concept that emphasizes the need of the United States to withdraw partially from international affairs and manage domestic affairs better.
6. _____ Name of major concept that emphasizes role of United States as a world leader.
7. _____ Name given to conflict between the United States and communist nations since World War II.
8. _____ President of the 1940s and 1950s whose doctrine was to fight communism wherever it seemed to be spreading.
9. _____ Foreign policy that involves the United States in organizations with many other nations.
10. _____ Foreign policy in which the United States "goes it alone," staying clear of efforts involving cooperation between multiple countries.
11. _____ Foreign policy in which countries take part in cooperative ventures with one another, in institutions like the U.N. and NATO, to deal with common problems.
12. _____ Foreign policy that is agreed upon by members of both major political parties.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEAT NO.</u>	<u>SCORE</u>

MASTERING IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Examine each statement below as if a U.S. citizen were saying it. In the blank provided, classify each statement as that of a) a neo-isolationist, b) an internationalist, or c) an adherent to the principle of containment.

1. _____ The situation in Haiti is simply out-of-hand; the U.S. Marines ought to go in there and install a government which will protect the rights of the Haitian people.
2. _____ The threat from North Korea is very real and it just doesn't make sense to remove our military forces from South Korea.
3. _____ Too many nations in the world, including Japan and many in Europe, have depended too long on the United States for their defense. Let's let them fend for themselves!
4. _____ The United States should attend world environmental conferences and take a leading role.
5. _____ Homelessness, hunger, a poor educational system—don't we have enough problems to take care of at home? Why do we need to take on everyone else's problems?
6. _____ We should keep our troops in Europe because another communist revolution in Russia is a distinct possibility.
7. _____ We're collapsing economically, so let's get our house in order at home before we go to the aid of people halfway around the world.
8. _____ Let's continue to isolate Cuba economically until that "commie pig" Fidel Castro is overthrown and communism is dead once and for all.
9. _____ In terms of world power we're number one, and without our leadership, the world system would be kind of like the NBA without Michael Jordan. No way should we give up the game while we're on top!
10. _____ Foreign aid! That's all we ever hear about! That money should be used to take care of Americans before anyone else is helped.

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